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OF

JOHN KEATS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
ROBERT BRIDGES

VOL. II



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LAMIA,
ISABELLA,
THE EVE OF ST. AGNES,
AND
OTHER POEMS.

PUBLISHED IN 1820.

ADVERTISEMENT.

IF any apology be thought necessary for the appearance of the unfinished poem of *HYPERION*, the publishers beg to state that they alone are responsible, as it was printed at their particular request, and contrary to the wish of the author. The poem was intended to have been of equal length with *ENDYMION*, but the reception given to that work discouraged the author from proceeding.

Fleet-Street, June 26, 1820.

L A M I A.

L A M I A.

PART I.

UPON a time, before the faery broods
Drove Nymph and Satyr from the prosperous woods,
Before King Oberon's bright diadem,
Sceptre, and mantle, clasp'd with dewy gem,
Frighted away the Dryads and the Fauns 5
From rushes green, and brakes, and cowslip'd lawns,
The ever-smitten Hermes empty left
His golden throne, bent warm on amorous theft :
From high Olympus had he stolen light,
On this side of Jove's clouds, to escape the sight 10
Of his great summoner, and made retreat
Into a forest on the shores of Crete.
For somewhere in that sacred island dwelt
A nymph, to whom all hoofed Satyrs knelt ;
At whose white feet the languid Tritons poured 15
Pearls, while on land they wither'd and adored.
Fast by the springs where she to bathe was wont,
And in those meads where sometime she might haunt,
Were strewn rich gifts, unknown to any Muse,
Though Fancy's casket were unlock'd to choose. 20

Ah, what a world of love was at her feet !
So Hermes thought, and a celestial heat
Burnt from his winged heels to either ear,
That from a whiteness, as the lily clear,
Blush'd into roses 'mid his golden hair, 25
Fallen in jealous curls about his shoulders bare.

From vale to vale, from wood to wood, he flew,
Breathing upon the flowers his passion new,
~~And~~ wound with many a river to its head,
To find where this sweet nymph prepar'd her secret
bed : 30

In vain ; the sweet nymph might nowhere be found,
And so he rested, on the lonely ground,
Pensive, and full of painful jealousies
Of the Wood-Gods, and even the very trees.
There as he stood, he heard a mournful voice, 35
Such as once heard, in gentle heart, destroys
All pain but pity : thus the lone voice spake :
“ When from this wreathed tomb shall I awake !
“ When move in a sweet body fit for life,
“ And love, and pleasure, and the ruddy strife 40
“ Of hearts and lips ! Ah, miserable me ! ”
The God, dove-footed, glided silently
Round bush and tree, soft-brushing, in his speed,
The taller grasses and full-flowering weed,
Until he found a palpitating snake, 45
Bright, and cirque-couchant in a dusky brake.

She was a gordian shape of dazzling hue,
Vermilion-spotted, golden, green, and blue ;

Striped like a zebra, freckled like a pard,
Eyed like a peacock, and all crimson barr'd ; 50
And full of silver moons, that, as she breathed,
Dissolv'd, or brighter shone, or interwreathed
Their lustres with the gloomier tapestries—
So rainbow-sided, touch'd with miseries,
She seem'd, at once, some penanced lady elt, 55
Some demon's mistress, or the demon's self.
Upon her crest she wore a wannish fire
Sprinkled with stars, like Ariadne's tiar :
Her head was serpent, but ah, bitter-sweet !
She had a woman's mouth with all its pearls com-
plete : 60
And for her eyes : what could such eyes do there
But weep, and weep, that they were born so fair ?
As Proserpine still weeps for her Sicilian air.
Her throat was serpent, but the words she spake
Came, as through bubbling honey, for Love's sake, 65
And thus ; while Hermes on his pinions lay,
Like a stoop'd falcon ere he takes his prey.

“Fair Hermes, crown'd with feathers, fluttering
light,
“I had a splendid dream of thee last night :
“I saw thee sitting, on a throne of gold, 70
“Among the Gods, upon Olympus old,
“The only sad one ; for thou didst not hear
“The soft, lute-finger'd Muses chaunting clear,
“Nor even Apollo when he sang alone,
“Deaf to his throbbing throat's long, long melodious
moan. 75

“ I dreamt I saw thee, robed in purple flakes,
“ Break amorous through the clouds, as morning
breaks,

“ And, swiftly as a bright Phœbean dart,
“ Strike for the Cretan isle ; and here thou art !
“ Too gentle Hermes, hast thou found the maid ? ” 80

Whereat the star of Lethe not delay’d

His rosy eloquence, and thus inquired :

“ Thou smooth-lipp’d serpent, surely high inspired !

“ Thou beauteous wreath, with melancholy eyes,

“ Possess whatever bliss thou canst devise, 85

“ Telling me only where my nymph is fled, —

“ Where she doth breathe ! ” “ Bright planet, thou
hast said, ”

Return’d the snake, “ but seal with oaths, fair God ! ”

“ I swear, ” said Hermes, “ by my serpent rod,

“ And by thine eyes, and by thy starry crown ! ” 90

Light flew his earnest words, among the blossoms
blown.

Then thus again the brilliance feminine :

“ Too frail of heart ! for this lost nymph of thine,

“ Free as the air, invisibly, she strays

“ About these thornless wilds ; her pleasant days 95

“ She tastes unseen ; unseen her nimble feet

“ Leave traces in the grass and flowers sweet ;

“ From weary tendrils, and bow’d branches green,

“ She plucks the fruit unseen, she bathes unseen :

“ And by my power is her beauty veil’d 100

“ To keep it unaffronted, unassail’d

“ By the love-glances of unlovely eyes,

“ Of Satyrs, Fauns, and blear’d Silenus’ sighs.

“Pale grew her immortality, for woe
“Of all these lovers, and she grieved so 105
“I took compassion on her, bade her steep
“Her hair in weird syrops, that would keep
“Her loveliness invisible, yet free
“To wander as she loves, in liberty.
“Thou shalt behold her, Hermes, thou alone, 110
“If thou wilt, as thou swearest, grant my boon!”
Then, once again, the charmed God began
An oath, and through the serpent’s ears it ran
Warm, tremulous, devout, psalterian.
Ravish’d, she lifted her Circean head, 115
Blush’d a live damask, and swift-lipping said,
“I was a woman, let me have once more
“A woman’s shape, and charming as before.
“I love a youth of Corinth—O the bliss!
“Give me my woman’s form, and place me where
 he is. 120
“Stoop, Hermes, let me breathe upon thy brow,
“And thou shalt see thy sweet nymph even
 now.”

The God on half-shut feathers sank serene,
She breath’d upon his eyes, and swift was seen
Of both the guarded nymph near-smiling on the
 green. 125

It was no dream ; or say a dream it was,
Real are the dreams of Gods, and smoothly pass
Their pleasures in a long immortal dream.
One warm, flush’d moment, hovering, it might seem
Dash’d by the wood-nymph’s beauty, so he burn’d ; 130
Then, lighting on the printless verdure, turn’d

To the swoon'd serpent, and with languid arm,
Delicate, put to proof the lythe Caducean charm.
So done, upon the nymph his eyes he bent
Full of adoring tears and blandishment, 135
And towards her stept : she, like a moon in wane,
Faded before him, cower'd, nor could restrain
Her fearful sobs, self-folding like a flower
That faints into itself at evening hour :
But the God fostering her chilled hand, 140
She felt the warmth, her eyelids open'd bland,
And, like new flowers at morning song of bees,
Bloom'd, and gave up her honey to the lees.
Into the green-recessed woods they flew ;
Nor grew they pale, as mortal lovers do. 145

Left to herself, the serpent now began
To change ; her elfin blood in madness ran,
Her mouth foam'd, and the grass, therewith besprent,
Wither'd at dew so sweet and virulent ;
Her eyes in torture fix'd, and anguish drear, 150
Hot, glaz'd, and wide, with lid-lashes all sear,
Flash'd phosphor and sharp sparks, without one cool-
ing tear.

The colours all inflam'd throughout her train,
She writh'd about, convuls'd with scarlet pain :
A deep volcanian yellow took the place 155
Of all her milder-mooned body's grace ;
And, as the lava ravishes the mead,
Spoilt all her silver mail, and golden brede ;
Made gloom of all her frecklings, streaks and bars,
Eclips'd her crescents, and lick'd up her stars : 160

So that, in moments few, she was undrest
Of all her sapphires, greens, and amethyst,
And rubious-argent: of all these bereft,
Nothing but pain and ugliness were left.
Still shone her crown ; that vanish'd, also she 165
Melted and disappear'd as suddenly ;
And in the air, her new voice luting soft,
Cried, " Lycius ! gentle Lycius ! "—Borne aloft
With the bright mists about the mountains hoar
These words dissolv'd: Crete's forests heard no
more. 170

Whither fled Lamia, now a lady bright,
A full-born beauty new and exquisite?
She fled into that valley they pass o'er
Who go to Corinth from Cenchreas' shore ;
And rested at the foot of those wild hills, 175
The rugged founts of the Peræan rills,
And of that other ridge whose barren back
Stretches, with all its mist and cloudy rack,
South-westward to Cleone. There she stood
About a young bird's flutter from a wood, 180
Fair, on a sloping green of mossy tread,
By a clear pool, wherein she passioned
To see herself escap'd from so sore ills,
While her robes flaunted with the daffodils.

Ah, happy Lycius !—for she was a maid 185
More beautiful than ever twisted braid,
Or sigh'd, or blush'd, or on spring-flowered lea
Spread a green kirtle to the minstrelsy :

A virgin purest lipp'd, yet in the lore
Of love deep learned to the red heart's core : 190
Not one hour old, yet of sciential brain
To unperplex bliss from its neighbour pain ;
Define their pettish limits, and estrange
Their points of contact, and swift counterchange ;
Intrigue with the specious chaos, and dispart 195
Its most ambiguous atoms with sure art ;
As though in Cupid's college she had spent
Sweet days a lovely graduate, still unshent,
And kept his rosy terms in idle languishment.

Why this fair creature chose so fairly 200
By the wayside to linger, we shall see ;
But first 'tis fit to tell how she could muse
And dream, when in the serpent prison-house,
Of all she list, strange or magnificent :
How, ever, where she will'd, her spirit went ; 205
Whether to faint Elysium, or where
Down through tress-lifting waves the Nereids fair
Wind into Thetis' bower by many a pearly stair ;
Or where God Bacchus drains his cups divine,
Stretch'd out, at ease, beneath a glutinous pine ; 210
Or where in Pluto's gardens palatine
Mulciber's columns gleam in far piazzian line.
And sometimes into cities she would send
Her dream, with feast and rioting to blend ;
And once, while among mortals dreaming thus, 215
She saw the young Corinthian Lycius
Charioting foremost in the envious race,
Like a young Jove with calm uneager face.

And fell into a swooning love of him.

Now on the moth-time of that evening dim 220

He would return that way, as well she knew,

To Corinth from the shore ; for freshly blew

The eastern soft wind, and his galley now

Grated the quaystones with her brazen prow

In port Cenchreas, from Egina isle 225

Fresh anchor'd ; whither he had been awhile

To sacrifice to Jove, whose temple there

Waits with high marble doors for blood and incense

rare.

Jove heard his vows, and better'd his desire ;

For by some freakful chance he made retire 230

From his companions, and set forth to walk,

Perhaps grown wearied of their Corinth talk :

Over the solitary hills he fared,

Thoughtless at first, but ere eve's star appeared

His phantasy was lost, where reason fades, 235

In the calm'd twilight of Platonic shades.

Lamia beheld him coming, near, more near—

Close to her passing, in indifference drear,

His silent sandals swept the mossy green ;

So neighbour'd to him, and yet so unseen 240

She stood : he pass'd, shut up in mysteries,

His mind wrapp'd like his mantle, while her eyes

Follow'd his steps, and her neck regal white

Turn'd—syllabbling thus, “ Ah, Lycius bright,

“ And will you leave me on the hills alone ? 245

“ Lycius, look back ! and be some pity shown.”

He did ; not with cold wonder fearingly,

But Orpheus-like at an Eurydice ;

For so delicious were the words she sung,
It seem'd he had lov'd them a whole summer long : 250
And soon his eyes had drunk her beauty up,
Leaving no drop in the bewildering cup,
And still the cup was full,—while he, afraid
Lest she should vanish ere his lip had paid
Due adoration, thus began to adore ; 255
Her soft look growing coy, she saw his chain so
sure :

“ Leave thee alone ! Look back ! Ah, Goddess, see
“ Whether my eyes can ever turn from thee !
“ For pity do not this sad heart belie—
“ Even as thou vanishest so I shall die. 260
“ Stay ! though a Naiad of the rivers, stay !
“ To thy far wishes will thy streams obey :
“ Stay ! though the greenest woods be thy domain,
“ Alone they can drink up the morning rain :
“ Though a descended Pleiad, will not one 265
“ Of thine harmonious sisters keep in tune
“ Thy spheres, and as thy silver proxy shine ?
“ So sweetly to these ravish'd ears of mine
“ Came thy sweet greeting, that if thou shouldst fade
“ Thy memory will waste me to a shade :— 270
“ For pity do not melt ! ” — “ If I should stay,”
Said Lamia, “ here, upon this floor of clay,
“ And pain my steps upon these flowers too rough,
“ What canst thou say or do of charm enough
“ To dull the nice remembrance of my home ? 275
“ Thou canst not ask me with thee here to roam
“ Over these hills and vales, where no joy is,—
“ Empty of immortality and bliss !

“Thou art a scholar, Lycius, and must know
“That finer spirits cannot breathe below 280
“In human climes, and live : Alas ! poor youth,
“What taste of purer air hast thou to soothe
“My essence ? What serener palaces,
“Where I may all my many senses please,
“And by mysterious sleights a hundred thirsts
 appease ? 285
“It cannot be—Adieu !” So said, she rose
Tiptoe with white arms spread. He, sick to lose
The amorous promise of her lone complain,
Swoon’d, murmuring of love, and pale with
 pain.
The cruel lady, without any show 290
Of sorrow for her tender favourite’s woe,
But rather, if her eyes could brighter be,
With brighter eyes and slow amenity,
Put her new lips to his, and gave afresh
The life she had so tangled in her mesh : 295
And as he from one trance was wakening
Into another, she began to sing,
Happy in beauty, life, and love, and every thing,
A song of love, too sweet for earthly lyres,
While, like held breath, the stars drew in their pant-
 ing fires. 300
And then she whisper’d in such trembling tone,
As those who, safe together met alone
For the first time through many anguish’d days,
Use other speech than looks ; bidding him raise
His drooping head, and clear his soul of doubt, 305
For that she was a woman, and without

Any more subtle fluid in her veins
Than throbbing blood, and that the self-same pains
Inhabited her frail-strung heart as his.
And next she wonder'd how his eyes could miss 310
Her face so long in Corinth, where, she said,
She dwelt but half retir'd, and there had led
Days happy as the gold coin could invent
Without the aid of love ; yet in content
Till she saw him, as once she pass'd him by, 315
Where 'gainst a column he leant thoughtfully
At Venus' temple porch, 'mid baskets heap'd
Of amorous herbs and flowers, newly reap'd
Late on that eve, as 'twas the night before
The Adonian feast ; whereof she saw no more, 320
But wept alone those days, for why should she adore ?
Lycius from death awoke into amaze,
To see her still, and singing so sweet lays ;
Then from amaze into delight he fell
To hear her whisper woman's lore so well ; 325
And every word she spake entic'd him on
To unperplex'd delight and pleasure known.
Let the mad poets say whate'er they please
Of the sweets of Fairies, Peris, Goddesses,
There is not such a treat among them all, 330
Haunters of cavern, lake, and waterfall,
As a real woman, lineal indeed
From Pyrrha's pebbles or old Adam's seed.
Thus gentle Lamia judg'd, and judg'd aright,
That Lycius could not love in half a fright, 335
So threw the goddess off, and won his heart
More pleasantly by playing woman's part,

With no more awe than what her beauty gave,
That, while it smote, still guaranteed to save.
Lycius to all made eloquent reply, 340
Marrying to every word a twinborn sigh ;
And last, pointing to Corinth, ask'd her sweet,
If 'twas too far that night for her soft feet.
The way was short, for Lamia's eagerness
Made, by a spell, the triple league decrease 345
To a few paces ; not at all surmised
By blinded Lycius, so in her comprized.
They pass'd the city gates, he knew not how,
So noiseless, and he never thought to know.

As men talk in a dream, so Corinth all, 350
Throughout her palaces imperial,
And all her populous streets and temples lewd,
Mutter'd, like tempest in the distance brew'd,
To the wide-spreaded night above her towers.
Men, women, rich and poor, in the cool hours, 355
Shuffled their sandals o'er the pavement white,
Companion'd or alone ; while many a light
Flared, here and there, from wealthy festivals,
And threw their moving shadows on the walls,
Or found them cluster'd in the corniced shade 360
Of some arch'd temple door, or dusky colonnade.

Muffling his face, of greeting friends in fear,
Her fingers he press'd hard, as one came near
With curl'd gray beard, sharp eyes, and smooth bald
crown,
Slow-stepp'd, and robed in philosophic gown: 365

Lycius shrank closer, as they met and past,
Into his mantle, adding wings to haste,
While hurried Lamia trembled : “ Ah,” said he,
“ Why do you shudder, love, so ruefully ?
“ Why does your tender palm dissolve in dew ? ”— 370
“ I’m wearied,” said fair Lamia : “ tell me who
“ Is that old man ? I cannot bring to mind
“ His features :—Lycius ! wherefore did you blind
“ Yourself from his quick eyes ? ” Lycius replied,
“ ’Tis Apollonius sage, my trusty guide 375
“ And good instructor ; but to-night he seems
“ The ghost of folly haunting my sweet dreams.”

While yet he spake they had arrived before
A pillar’d porch, with lofty portal door,
Where hung a silver lamp, whose phosphor glow 380
Reflected in the slabbed steps below,
Mild as a star in water ; for so new,
And so unsullied was the marble hue,
So through the crystal polish, liquid fine,
Ran the dark veins, that none but feet divine 385
Could e’er have touch’d there. Sounds Æolian
Breath’d from the hinges, as the ample span
Of the wide doors disclos’d a place unknown
Some time to any, but those two alone,
And a few Persian mutes, who that same year 390
Were seen about the markets : none knew
where
They could inhabit ; the most curious
Were foil’d, who watch’d to trace them to their
house :

And but the flitter-winged verse must tell,
For truth's sake, what woe afterwards befel, 395
'Twould humour many a heart to leave them thus,
Shut from the busy world of more incredulous.

PART II.

LOVE in a hut, with water and a crust,
Is—Love, forgive us !—cinders, ashes, dust ;
Love in a palace is perhaps at last
More grievous torment than a hermit's fast :—
That is a doubtful tale from faery land, 5
Hard for the non-elect to understand.
Had Lycius liv'd to hand his story down,
He might have given the moral a fresh frown,
Or clench'd it quite : but too short was their bliss
To breed distrust and hate, that make the soft voice
hiss. 10

Besides, there, nightly, with terrific glare,
Love, jealous grown of so complete a pair,
Hover'd and buzz'd his wings, with fearful roar,
Above the lintel of their chamber door,
And down the passage cast a glow upon the floor. 15

For all this came a ruin : side by side
They were enthroned, in the even tide,
Upon a couch, near to a curtaining
Whose airy texture, from a golden string,
Floated into the room, and let appear 20
Unveil'd the summer heaven, blue and clear,

Betwixt two marble shafts :—there they reposed,
Where use had made it sweet, with eyelids closed,
Saving a tythe which love still open kept,
That they might see each other while they almost
slept ;

25

When from the slope side of a suburb hill,
Deafening the swallow's twitter, came a thrill
Of trumpets—Lycius started—the sounds fled,
But left a thought, a buzzing in his head.

For the first time, since first he harbour'd in

30

That purple-lined palace of sweet sin,
His spirit pass'd beyond its golden bourn
Into the noisy world almost forsworn.

The lady, ever watchful, penetrant,

Saw this with pain, so arguing a want

35

Of something more, more than her empery

Of joys ; and she began to moan and sigh

Because he mused beyond her, knowing well

That but a moment's thought is passion's passing bell.

“ Why do you sigh, fair creature ? ” whispered he : 40

“ Why do you think ? ” return'd she tenderly :

“ You have deserted me ;—where am I now ?

“ Not in your heart while care weighs on your brow :

“ No, no, you have dismiss'd me ; and I go

“ From your breast houseless : ay, it must be so.” 45

He answer'd, bending to her open eyes,

Where he was mirror'd small in paradise,

“ My silver planet, both of eve and morn !

“ Why will you plead yourself so sad forlorn,

“ While I am striving how to fill my heart

50

“ With deeper crimson, and a double smart ?

“How to entangle, trammel up and snare
“Your soul in mine, and labyrinth you there
“Like the hid scent in an unbudded rose?
“Ay, a sweet kiss—you see your mighty woes. 55
“My thoughts! shall I unveil them? Listen then!
“What mortal hath a prize, that other men
“May be confounded and abash’d withal,
“But lets it sometimes pace abroad majestic,
“And triumph, as in thee I should rejoice 60
“Amid the hoarse alarm of Corinth’s voice.
“Let my foes choke, and my friends shout afar,
“While through the thronged streets your bridal car
“Wheels round its dazzling spokes.”—The lady’s
cheek

Trembled; she nothing said, but, pale and meek, 65
Arose and knelt before him, wept a rain
Of sorrows at his words; at last with pain
Beseeching him, the while his hand she wrung,
To change his purpose. He thereat was stung,
Perverse, with stronger fancy to reclaim 70
Her wild and timid nature to his aim:
Besides, for all his love, in self despite,
Against his better self, he took delight
Luxurious in her sorrows, soft and new.
His passion, cruel grown, took on a hue 75
Fierce and sanguineous as ’twas possible
In one whose brow had no dark veins to swell.
Fine was the mitigated fury, like
Apollo’s presence when in act to strike
The serpent—Ha, the serpent! certes, she 80
Was none. She burnt, she lov’d the tyranny,

And, all subdued, consented to the hour
When to the bridal he should lead his paramour.
Whispering in midnight silence, said the youth,
“Sure some sweet name thou hast, though, by my
truth,

85

“I have not ask’d it, ever thinking thee
“Not mortal, but of heavenly progeny,
“As still I do. Hast any mortal name,
“Fit appellation for this dazzling frame?
“Or friends or kinsfolk on the citied earth,
“To share our marriage feast and nuptial mirth?”
“I have no friends,” said Lamia, “no, not one;
“My presence in wide Corinth hardly known :
“My parents’ bones are in their dusty urns
“Sepulchred, where no kindled incense burns,
“Seeing all their luckless race are dead, save me,
“And I neglect the holy rite for thee.
“Even as you list invite your many guests ;
“But if, as now it seems, your vision rests
“With any pleasure on me, do not bid
“Old Apollonius—from him keep me hid.”
Lycius, perplex’d at words so blind and blank,
Made close inquiry ; from whose touch she shrank,
Feigning a sleep ; and he to the dull shade
Of deep sleep in a moment was betray’d.

90

95

100

105

It was the custom then to bring away
The bride from home at blushing shut of day,
Veil’d, in a chariot, heralded along
By strewn flowers, torches, and a marriage song,
With other pageants : but this fair unknown

110

Had not a friend. So being left alone,
(Lycius was gone to summon all his kin)
And knowing surely she could never win
His foolish heart from its mad pompousness,
She set herself, high-thoughted, how to dress 115
The misery in fit magnificence.

She did so, but 'tis doubtful how and whence
Came, and who were her subtle servitors.
About the halls, and to and from the doors,
There was a noise of wings, till in short space 120
The glowing banquet-room shone with wide-arched
grace.

A haunting music, sole perhaps and lone
Supportress of the faery-roof, made moan
Throughout, as fearful the whole charm might fade.
Fresh carved cedar, mimicking a glade 125
Of palm and plantain, met from either side,
High in the midst, in honor of the bride :
Two palms and then two plantains, and so on,
From either side their stems branch'd one to one
All down the aisled place ; and beneath all 130
There ran a stream of lamps straight on from wall to
wall.

So canopied, lay an untasted feast
Teeming with odours. Lamia, regal drest,
Silently paced about, and as she went,
In pale contented sort of discontent, 135
Mission'd her viewless servants to enrich
The fretted splendour of each nook and niche.
Between the tree-stems, marbled plain at first,
Came jasper pannels ; then, anon, there burst

Forth creeping imagery of slighter trees, 140
And with the larger wove in small intricacies.
Approving all, she faded at self-will,
And shut the chamber up, close, hush'd and still,
Complete and ready for the revels rude,
When dreadful guests would come to spoil her
solitude. 145

The day appear'd, and all the gossip rout.
O senseless Lycius ! Madman ! wherefore flout
The silent-blessing fate, warm cloister'd hours,
And show to common eyes these secret bowers ?
The herd approach'd ; each guest, with busy brain, 150
Arriving at the portal, gaz'd amain,
And enter'd marveling : for they knew the street,
Remember'd it from childhood all complete
Without a gap, yet ne'er before had seen
That royal porch, that high-built fair demesne ; 155
So in they hurried all, maz'd, curious and keen :
Save one, who look'd thereon with eye severe,
And with calm-planted steps walk'd in austere ;
'Twas Apollonius : something too he laugh'd,
As though some knotty problem, that had daft 160
His patient thought, had now begun to thaw,
And solve and melt :—'twas just as he foresaw.

He met within the murmurous vestibule
His young disciple. "'Tis no common rule,
" Lycius," said he, "for uninvited guest 165
"To force himself upon you, and infest
"With an unbidden presence the bright throng

“Of younger friends ; yet must I do this wrong,
“And you forgive me.” Lycius blush’d, and led
The old man through the inner doors broad-spread ; 170
With reconciling words and courteous mien
Turning into sweet milk the sophist’s spleen.

Of wealthy lustre was the banquet-room,
Fill’d with pervading brilliance and perfume :
Before each lucid pannel fuming stood 175
A censer fed with myrrh and spiced wood,
Each by a sacred tripod held aloft,
Whose slender feet wide-swerv’d upon the soft
Wool-woofed carpets : fifty wreaths of smoke
From fifty censers their light voyage took 180
To the high roof, still mimick’d as they rose
Along the mirror’d walls by twin-clouds odorous.
Twelve sphered tables, by silk seats insphered,
High as the level of a man’s breast rear’d
On libbard’s paws, upheld the heavy gold 185
Of cups and goblets, and the store thrice told
Of Ceres’ horn, and, in huge vessels, wine
Come from the gloomy tun with merry shine.
Thus loaded with a feast the tables stood,
Each shrining in the midst the image of a God. 190

When in an antichamber every guest
Had felt the cold full sponge to pleasure press’d,
By minist’ring slaves, upon his hands and feet,
And fragrant oils with ceremony meet
Pour’d on his hair, they all mov’d to the feast 195
In white robes, and themselves in order placed

Around the silken couches, wondering
Whence all this mighty cost and blaze of wealth could
spring.

Soft went the music the soft air along,
While fluent Greek a vowel'd undersong 200
Kept up among the guests, discoursing low
At first, for scarcely was the wine at flow ;
But when the happy vintage touch'd their brains,
Louder they talk, and louder come the strains
Of powerful instruments :—the gorgeous dyes, 205
The space, the splendour of the draperies,
The roof of awful richness, nectarous cheer,
Beautiful slaves, and Lamia's self, appear,
Now, when the wine has done its rosy deed,
And every soul from human trammels freed, 210
No more so strange ; for merry wine, sweet wine,
Will make Elysian shades not too fair, too divine.
Soon was God Bacchus at meridian height ;
Flush'd were their cheeks, and bright eyes double
bright :
Garlands of every green, and every scent 215
From vales deflower'd, or forest-trees branch-rent,
In baskets of bright osier'd gold were brought
High as the handles heap'd, to suit the thought
Of every guest ; that each, as he did please,
Might fancy-fit his brows, silk-pillow'd at his ease. 220

What wreath for Lamia ? What for Lycius ?
What for the sage, old Apollonius ?
Upon her aching forehead be there hung

The leaves of willow and of adder's tongue ;
And for the youth, quick, let us strip for him 225
The thyrsus, that his watching eyes may swim
Into forgetfulness ; and, for the sage,
Let spear-grass and the spiteful thistle wage
War on his temples. Do not all charms fly
At the mere touch of cold philosophy ? 230
There was an awful rainbow once in heaven :
We know her woof, her texture ; she is given
In the dull catalogue of common things.
Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings,
Conquer all mysteries by rule and line, 235
Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine—
Unweave a rainbow, as it erewhile made
The tender-person'd Lamia melt into a shade.

By her glad Lycius sitting, in chief place,
Scarce saw in all the room another face, 240
Till, checking his love trance, a cup he took
Full brimm'd, and opposite sent forth a look
'Cross the broad table, to beseech a glance
From his old teacher's wrinkled countenance,
And pledge him. The bald-head philosopher 245
Had fix'd his eye, without a twinkle or stir
Full on the alarmed beauty of the bride,
Brow-beating her fair form, and troubling her sweet
pride.

Lycius then press'd her hand, with devout touch,
As pale it lay upon the rosy couch : 250
'Twas icy, and the cold ran through his veins ;
Then sudden it grew hot, and all the pains

Of an unnatural heat shot to his heart.

“Lamia, what means this? Wherefore dost thou start?

“Know’st thou that man?” Poor Lamia answer’d
not. 255

He gaz’d into her eyes, and not a jot

Own’d they the lovelorn piteous appeal :

More, more he gaz’d : his human senses reel :

Some hungry spell that loveliness absorbs ;

There was no recognition in those orbs. 260

“Lamia !” he cried—and no soft-toned reply.

The many heard, and the loud revelry

Grew hush ; the stately music no more breathes ;

The myrtle sicken’d in a thousand wreaths.

By faint degrees, voice, lute, and pleasure ceased ; 265

A deadly silence step by step increased,

Until it seem’d a horrid presence there,

And not a man but felt the terror in his hair.

“Lamia !” he shriek’d ; and nothing but the
shriek

With its sad echo did the silence break. 270

“Begone, foul dream !” he cried, gazing again

In the bride’s face, where now no azure vein

Wander’d on fair-spaced temples ; no soft bloom

Misted the cheek ; no passion to illume

The deep-recessed vision :—all was blight ; 275

Lamia, no longer fair, there sat a deadly white.

“Shut, shut those juggling eyes, thou ruthless man !

“Turn them aside, wretch ! or the righteous ban

“Of all the Gods, whose dreadful images

“Here represent their shadowy presences, 280

“May pierce them on the sudden with the
thorn

“Of painful blindness ; leaving thee forlorn,

“In trembling dotage to the feeblest fright

“Of conscience, for their long offended might,

“For all thine impious proud-heart sophistries, 285

“Unlawful magic, and enticing lies.

“Corinthians ! look upon that grey-beard wretch !

“Mark how, possess’d, his lashless eyelids stretch

“Around his demon eyes ! Corinthians, see !

“My sweet bride withers at their potency.” 290

“Fool !” said the sophist, in an under-tone

Gruff with contempt ; which a death-nighing moan

From Lycius answer’d, as heart-struck and lost,

He sank supine beside the aching ghost.

“Fool ! Fool !” repeated he, while his eyes still 295

Relented not, nor mov’d ; “from every ill

“Of life have I preserv’d thee to this day,

“And shall I see thee made a serpent’s prey ?”

Then Lamia breath’d death breath ; the sophist’s
eye,

Like a sharp spear, went through her utterly, 300

Keen, cruel, perçant, stinging : she, as well

As her weak hand could any meaning tell,

Motion’d him to be silent ; vainly so,

He look’d and look’d again a level—No !

“A serpent !” echoed he ; no sooner said, 305

Than with a frightful scream she vanished :

And Lycius’ arms were empty of delight,

As were his limbs of life, from that same
night.

On the high couch he lay !—his friends came round—
Supported him—no pulse, or breath they found, 310
And, in its marriage robe, the heavy body wound.*

* “ Philostratus, in his fourth book *de Vita Apollonii*, hath a memorable instance in this kind, which I may not omit, of one Menippus Lycius, a young man twenty-five years of age, that going betwixt Cenchreas and Corinth met such a phantasm in the habit of a fair gentlewoman, which taking him by the hand, carried him home to her house, in the suburbs of Corinth, and told him she was a Phœnician by birth, and if he would tarry with her, he should hear her sing and play, and drink such wine as never any drank, and no man should molest him ; but she, being fair and lovely, would live and die with him, that was fair and lovely to behold. The young man, a philosopher, otherwise staid and discreet, able to moderate his passions, though not this of love, tarried with her a while to his great content, and at last married her, to whose wedding, amongst other guests, came Apollonius ; who, by some probable conjectures, found her out to be a serpent, a lamia ; and that all her furniture was, like Tantalus' gold, described by Homer, no substance, but mere illusions. When she saw herself descried, she wept, and desired Apollonius to be silent, but he would not be moved, and thereupon she, plate, house, and all that was in it, vanished in an instant : many thousands took notice of this fact, for it was done in the midst of Greece.”—*Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy,"* Part III., Sect. 2, Memb. 1, Subs. 1.

ISABELLA ;
OR,
THE POT OF BASIL.
A STORY FROM BOCCACCIO.

ISABELLA;
OR,
THE POT OF BASIL.

I.

FAIR Isabel, poor simple Isabel !

Lorenzo, a young palmer in Love's eye !

They could not in the self-same mansion dwell

Without some stir of heart, some malady ;

They could not sit at meals but feel how well

It soothed each to be the other by ;

They could not, sure, beneath the same roof sleep,

But to each other dream, and nightly weep.

II.

With every morn their love grew tenderer,

With every eve deeper and tenderer still ;

He might not in house, field, or garden stir,

But her full shape would all his seeing fill ;

And his continual voice was pleasanter

To her, than noise of trees or hidden rill ;

Her lute-string gave an echo of his name,

She spoilt her half-done broidery with the same.

III.

He knew whose gentle hand was at the latch,
Before the door had given her to his eyes ;
And from her chamber-window he would catch
Her beauty farther than the falcon spies ;
And constant as her vespers would he watch,
Because her face was turn'd to the same skies ;
And with sick longing all the night outwear,
To hear her morning-step upon the stair.

IV.

A whole long month of May in this sad plight
Made their cheeks paler by the break of June :
“ To-morrow will I bow to my delight,
“ To-morrow will I ask my lady's boon.”—
“ O may I never see another night,
“ Lorenzo, if thy lips breathe not love's tune.”—
So spake they to their pillows ; but, alas,
Honeyless days and days did he let pass ;

V.

Until sweet Isabella's untouch'd cheek
Fell sick within the rose's just domain,
Fell thin as a young mother's, who doth seek
By every lull to cool her infant's pain :
“ How ill she is,” said he, “ I may not speak,
“ And yet I will, and tell my love all plain :
“ If looks speak love-laws, I will drink her tears,
“ And at the least 'twill startle off her cares.”

VI.

So said he one fair morning, and all day
His heart beat awfully against his side ;
And to his heart he inwardly did pray
For power to speak ; but still the ruddy tide
Stifled his voice, and puls'd resolve away—
Fever'd his high conceit of such a bride,
Yet brought him to the meekness of a child :
Alas ! when passion is both meek and wild !

VII.

So once more he had wak'd and anguished
A dreary night of love and misery,
If Isabel's quick eye had not been wed
To every symbol on his forehead high ;
She saw it waxing very pale and dead,
And straight all flush'd ; so, lisped tenderly,
“Lorenzo !”—here she ceas'd her timid quest,
But in her tone and look he read the rest.*

* In Woodhouse's transcript this stanza concludes with a different couplet, and it is followed by another stanza, afterwards suppressed :—

“Lorenzo, I would clip my ringlet hair
To make thee laugh again and debonnair.”

“Then should I be,” said he, “full deified ;
And yet I would not have it, clip it not :
For, lady, I do love it where 'tis tied
About the neck I dote on, and that spot
That anxious dimple it doth take a pride
To play about.—Aye, lady, I have got
Its shadow in my heart, and every sweet
Its mistress owns there summed all complete.”

VIII.

“O Isabella, I can half perceive
“That I may speak my grief into thine ear;
“If thou didst ever any thing believe,
“Believe how I love thee, believe how near
“My soul is to its doom : I would not grieve
“Thy hand by unwelcome pressing, would not fear
“Thine eyes by gazing ; but I cannot live
“Another night, and not my passion shrive.

IX.

“Love ! thou art leading me from wintry cold,
“Lady ! thou leadest me to summer clime,
“And I must taste the blossoms that unfold
“In its ripe warmth this gracious morning time.”
So said, his erewhile timid lips grew bold,
And poesied with hers in dewy rhyme :
Great bliss was with them, and great happiness
Grew, like a lusty flower in June’s caress.

X.

Parting they seem’d to tread upon the air,
Twin roses by the zephyr blown apart
Only to meet again more close, and share
The inward fragrance of each other’s heart.
She, to her chamber gone, a ditty fair
Sang, of delicious love and honey’d dart ;
He with light steps went up a western hill,
And bade the sun farewell, and joy’d his fill.

XI.

All close they met again, before the dusk
 Had taken from the stars its pleasant veil,
All close they met, all eves, before the dusk
 Had taken from the stars its pleasant veil,
Close in a bower of hyacinth and musk,
 Unknown of any, free from whispering tale.
Ah ! better had it been for ever so,
Than idle ears should pleasure in their woe.

XII.

Were they unhappy then ?—It cannot be—
 Too many tears for lovers have been shed,
Too many sighs give we to them in fee,
 Too much of pity after they are dead,
Too many doleful stories do we see,
 Whose matter in bright gold were best be read ;
Except in such a page where Theseus' spouse
Over the pathless waves towards him bows.

XIII.

But, for the general award of love,
 The little sweet doth kill much bitterness ;
Though Dido silent is in under-grove,
 And Isabella's was a great distress,
Though young Lorenzo in warm Indian clove
 Was not embalm'd, this truth is not the less—
Even bees, the little almsmen of spring-bowers,
Know there is richest juice in poison-flowers.

XIV.

With her two brothers this fair lady dwelt,
Enriched from ancestral merchandize,
And for them many a weary hand did swelt
In torched mines and noisy factories,
And many once proud-quiver'd loins did melt
In blood from stinging whip ;—with hollow eyes
Many all day in dazzling river stood,
To take the rich-ored driftings of the flood.

XV.

For them the Ceylon diver held his breath,
And went all naked to the hungry shark ;
For them his ears gush'd blood ; for them in death
The seal on the cold ice with piteous bark
Lay full of darts ; for them alone did seethe
A thousand men in troubles wide and dark :
Half-ignorant, they turn'd an easy wheel,
That set sharp racks at work, to pinch and peel.

XVI.

Why were they proud ? Because their marble founts
Gush'd with more pride than do a wretch's tears ?—
Why were they proud ? Because fair orange-mounts
Were of more soft ascent than lazar stairs ?—
Why were they proud ? Because red-lined accounts
Were richer than the songs of Grecian years ?—
Why were they proud ? again we ask aloud,
Why in the name of Glory were they proud ?

XVII.

Yet were these Florentines as self-retired
In hungry pride and gainful cowardice,
As two close Hebrews in that land inspired,
Paled in and vineyarded from beggar-spies ;
The hawks of ship-mast forests—the untired
And pannier'd mules for ducats and old lies—
Quick cat's-paws on the generous stray-away,—
Great wits in Spanish, Tuscan, and Malay.

XVIII.

How was it these same ledger-men could spy
Fair Isabella in her downy nest ?
How could they find out in Lorenzo's eye
A straying from his toil ? Hot Egypt's pest
Into their vision covetous and sly !
How could these money-bags see east and west ?—
Yet so they did—and every dealer fair
Must see behind, as doth the hunted hare.

XIX.

O eloquent and famed Boccaccio !
Of thee we now should ask forgiving boon,
And of thy spicy myrtles as they blow,
And of thy roses amorous of the moon,
And of thy lilies, that do paler grow
Now they can no more hear thy ghittern's tune,
For venturing syllables that ill beseem
The quiet glooms of such a piteous theme.

XX.

Grant thou a pardon here, and then the tale
Shall move on soberly, as it is meet ;
There is no other crime, no mad assail
To make old prose in modern rhyme more sweet :
But it is done—succeed the verse or fail—
To honour thee, and thy gone spirit greet ;
To stead thee as a verse in English tongue,
An echo of thee in the north-wind sung.

XXI.

These brethren having found by many signs
What love Lorenzo for their sister had, .
And how she lov'd him too, each unconfines
His bitter thoughts to other, well nigh mad
That he, the servant of their trade designs,
Should in their sister's love be blithe and glad,
When 'twas their plan to coax her by degrees
To some high noble and his olive-trees.

XXII.

And many a jealous conference had they,
And many times they bit their lips alone,
Before they fix'd upon a surest way
To make the youngster for his crime atone ;
And at the last, these men of cruel clay
Cut Mercy with a sharp knife to the bone ;
For they resolved in some forest dim
To kill Lorenzo, and there bury him.

XXIII.

So on a pleasant morning, as he leant
Into the sun-rise, o'er the balustrade
Of the garden-terrace, towards him they bent
Their footing through the dews ; and to him said,
“ You seem there in the quiet of content,
“ Lorenzo, and we are most loth to invade
“ Calm speculation ; but if you are wise,
“ Bestride your steed while cold is in the skies.

XXIV.

“ To-day we purpose, ay, this hour we mount
“ To spur three leagues towards the Apennine ;
“ Come down, we pray thee, ere the hot sun count
“ His dewy rosary on the eglantine.”
Lorenzo, courteously as he was wont,
Bow'd a fair greeting to these serpents' whine ;
And went in haste, to get in readiness,
With belt, and spur, and bracing huntsman's dress.

XXV.

And as he to the court-yard pass'd along,
Each third step did he pause, and listen'd oft
If he could hear his lady's matin-song,
Or the light whisper of her footstep soft ;
And as he thus over his passion hung,
He heard a laugh full musical aloft ;
When, looking up, he saw her features bright
Smile through an in-door lattice, all delight.

XXVI.

“Love, Isabel !” said he, “I was in pain
“Lest I should miss to bid thee a good morrow :
“Ah ! what if I should lose thee, when so fain
“I am to stifle all the heavy sorrow
“Of a poor three hours’ absence ? but we’ll gain
“Out of the amorous dark what day doth borrow.
“Good bye ! I’ll soon be back.”—“Good bye !” said
she :—
And as he went she chanted merrily.

XXVII.

So the two brothers and their murder’d man
Rode past fair Florence, to where Arno’s stream
Gurgles through straiten’d banks, and still doth fan
Itself with dancing bulrush, and the bream
Keeps head against the freshets. Sick and wan
The brothers’ faces in the ford did seem,
Lorenzo’s flush with love.—They pass’d the water
Into a forest quiet for the slaughter.

XXVIII.

There was Lorenzo slain and buried in,
There in that forest did his great love cease ;
Ah ! when a soul doth thus its freedom win,
It aches in loneliness—is ill at peace
As the break-covert blood-hounds of such sin :
They dipp’d their swords in the water, and did tease
Their horses homeward, with convulsed spur,
Each richer by his being a murderer.

XXIX.

They told their sister how, with sudden speed,
Lorenzo had ta'en ship for foreign lands,
Because of some great urgency and need
In their affairs, requiring trusty hands.
Poor Girl ! put on thy stifling widow's weed,
And 'scape at once from Hope's accursed bands ;
To-day thou wilt not see him, nor to-morrow,
And the next day will be a day of sorrow.

XXX.

She weeps alone for pleasures not to be ;
Sorely she wept until the night came on,
And then, instead of love, O misery !
She brooded o'er the luxury alone :
His image in the dusk she seem'd to see,
And to the silence made a gentle moan,
Spreading her perfect arms upon the air,
And on her couch low murmuring " Where ? O where ? "

XXXI.

But Selfishness, Love's cousin, held not long
Its fiery vigil in her single breast ;
She fretted for the golden hour, and hung
Upon the time with feverish unrest—
Not long—for soon into her heart a throng
Of higher occupants, a richer zest,
Came tragic ; passion not to be subdued,
And sorrow for her love in travels rude.

XXXII.

In the mid days of autumn, on their eves
The breath of Winter comes from far away,
And the sick west continually bereaves
Of some gold tinge, and plays a roundelay
Of death among the bushes and the leaves,
To make all bare before he dares to stray
From his north cavern. So sweet Isabel
By gradual decay from beauty fell,

XXXIII.

Because Lorenzo came not. Oftentimes
She ask'd her brothers, with an eye all pale,
Striving to be itself, what dungeon climes
Could keep him off so long? They spake a tale
Time after time, to quiet her. Their crimes
Came on them, like a smoke from Hinnom's vale ;
And every night in dreams they groan'd aloud,
To see their sister in her snowy shroud.

XXXIV.

And she had died in drowsy ignorance,
But for a thing more deadly dark than all ;
It came like a fierce potion, drunk by chance,
Which saves a sick man from the feather'd pall
For some few gasping moments ; like a lance,
Waking an Indian from his cloudy hall
With cruel pierce, and bringing him again
Sense of the gnawing fire at heart and brain.

XXXV.

It was a vision.—In the drowsy gloom,
The dull of midnight, at her couch's foot
Lorenzo stood, and wept: the forest tomb
Had marr'd his glossy hair which once could shoot
Lustre into the sun, and put cold doom
Upon his lips, and taken the soft lute
From his lorn voice, and past his loamed ears
Had made a miry channel for his tears.

XXXVI.

Strange sound it was, when the pale shadow spake ;
For there was striving, in its piteous tongue,
To speak as when on earth it was awake,
And Isabella on its music hung :
Languor there was in it, and tremulous shake,
As in a palsied Druid's harp unstrung ;
And through it moan'd a ghostly under-song,
Like hoarse night-gusts sepulchral briars among.

XXXVII.

Its eyes, though wild, were still all dewy bright
With love, and kept all phantom fear aloof
From the poor girl by magic of their light,
The while it did unthread the horrid woof
Of the late darken'd time,—the murderous spite
Of pride and avarice,—the dark pine roof
In the forest,—and the sodden turfed dell,
Where, without any word, from stabs he fell.

XXXVIII.

Saying moreover, "Isabel, my sweet !

"Red whortle-berries droop above my head

"And a large flint-stone weighs upon my feet ;

"Around me beeches and high chestnuts shed

"Their leaves and prickly nuts ; a sheep-fold bleat

"Comes from beyond the river to my bed :

"Go, shed one tear upon my heather-bloom,

"And it shall comfort me within the tomb.

XXXIX.

"I am a shadow now, alas ! alas !

"Upon the skirts of human-nature dwelling

"Alone : I chant alone the holy mass,

"While little sounds of life are round me knelling,

"And glossy bees at noon do fieldward pass,

"And many a chapel bell the hour is telling,

"Paining me through : those sounds grow strange to me,

"And thou art distant in Humanity.

XL.

"I know what was, I feel full well what is,

"And I should rage, if spirits could go mad ;

"Though I forget the taste of earthly bliss,

"That paleness warms my grave, as though I had

"A Seraph chosen from the bright abyss

"To be my spouse : thy paleness makes me glad ;

"Thy beauty grows upon me, and I feel

"A greater love through all my essence steal."

XLI.

The Spirit mourn'd "Adieu!"—dissolv'd, and left
The atom darkness in a slow turmoil ;
As when of healthful midnight sleep bereft,
Thinking on rugged hours and fruitless toil,
We put our eyes into a pillowy cleft,
And see the spangly gloom froth up and boil :
It made sad Isabella's eyelids ache,
And in the dawn she started up awake ;

XLII.

"Ha ! ha !" said she, "I knew not this hard life,
"I thought the worst was simple misery ;
"I thought some Fate with pleasure or with strife
"Portion'd us—happy days, or else to die ;
"But there is crime—a brother's bloody knife !
"Sweet Spirit, thou hast school'd my infancy :
"I'll visit thee for this, and kiss thine eyes,
"And greet thee morn and even in the skies."

XLIII.

When the full morning came, she had devised
How she might secret to the forest hie ;
How she might find the clay, so dearly prized,
And sing to it one latest lullaby ;
How her short absence might be unsurmised,
While she the inmost of the dream would try.
Resolv'd, she took with her an aged nurse,
And went into that dismal forest-hearse.

XLIV.

See, as they creep along the river side,
How she doth whisper to that aged Dame,
And, after looking round the champaign wide,
Shows her a knife.—“What feverish hectic flame
“Burns in thee, child?—What good can thee betide,
“That thou should'st smile again?”—The evening
came,
And they had found Lorenzo's earthy bed ;
The flint was there, the berries at his head.

XLV.

Who hath not loiter'd in a green church-yard,
And let his spirit, like a demon-mole,
Work through the clayey soil and gravel hard,
To see scull, coffin'd bones, and funeral stole ;
Pitying each form that hungry Death hath marr'd,
And filling it once more with human soul ?
Ah ! this is holiday to what was felt
When Isabella by Lorenzo knelt.

XLVI.

She gaz'd into the fresh-thrown mould, as though
One glance did fully all its secrets tell ;
Clearly she saw, as other eyes would know
Pale limbs at bottom of a crystal well ;
Upon the murderous spot she seem'd to grow,
Like to a native lily of the dell :
Then with her knife, all sudden, she began
To dig more fervently than misers can.

XLVII.

Soon she turn'd up a soiled glove, whereon
Her silk had play'd in purple phantasies,
She kiss'd it with a lip more chill than stone,
And put it in her bosom, where it dries
And freezes utterly unto the bone

Those dainties made to still an infant's cries :
Then 'gan she work again ; nor stay'd her care,
But to throw back at times her veiling hair.

XLVIII.

That old nurse stood beside her wondering,
Until her heart felt pity to the core
At sight of such a dismal labouring,

And so she kneeled, with her locks all hoar,
And put her lean hands to the horrid thing :

Three hours they labour'd at this travail sore ;
At last they felt the kernel of the grave,
And Isabella did not stamp and rave.

XLIX.

Ah ! wherefore all this wormy circumstance ?

Why linger at the yawning tomb so long ?
O for the gentleness of old Romance,

The simple plaining of a minstrel's song !
Fair reader, at the old tale take a glance,

For here, in truth, it doth not well belong
To speak :—O turn thee to the very tale,
And taste the music of that vision pale.

L.

With duller steel than the Perséan sword

They cut away no formless monster's head,
But one, whose gentleness did well accord

With death, as life. The ancient harps have said,
Love never dies, but lives, immortal Lord :

If Love impersonate was ever dead,
Pale Isabella kiss'd it, and low moan'd.

'Twas love ; cold,—dead indeed, but not dethroned.

Lī.

In anxious secrecy they took it home,

And then the prize was all for Isabel :

She calm'd its wild hair with a golden comb,

And all around each eye's sepulchral cell

Pointed each fringed lash ; the smeared loam

With tears, as chilly as a dripping well,

She drench'd away :—and still she comb'd, and kept
Sighing all day—and still she kiss'd, and wept.

LII.

Then in a silken scarf,—sweet with the dews

Of precious flowers pluck'd in Araby,

And divine liquids come with odorous ooze

Through the cold serpent-pipe refreshfully,—

She wrapp'd it up ; and for its tomb did choose

A garden-pot wherein she laid it by,

And cover'd it with mould, and o'er it set

Sweet Basil, which her tears kept ever wet.

LIII.

And she forgot the stars, the moon, and sun,
And she forgot the blue above the trees,
And she forgot the dells where waters run,
And she forgot the chilly autumn breeze ;
She had no knowledge when the day was done,
And the new morn she saw not : but in peace
Hung over her sweet Basil evermore,
And moisten'd it with tears unto the core.

LIV.

And so she ever fed it with thin tears,
Whence thick, and green, and beautiful it grew,
So that it smelt more balmy than its peers
Of Basil-tufts in Florence ; for it drew
Nurture besides, and life, from human fears,
From the fast mouldering head there shut from view
So that the jewel, safely casketed,
Came forth, and in perfumed leafits spread.

LV.

O Melancholy, linger here awhile !
O Music, Music, breathe despondingly !
O Echo, Echo, from some sombre isle,
Unknown, Lethean, sigh to us—O sigh !
Spirits in grief, lift up your heads, and smile ;
Lift up your heads, sweet Spirits, heavily,
And make a pale light in your cypress glooms,
Tinting with silver wan your marble tombs.

LVI.

Moan hither, all ye syllables of woe,
From the deep throat of sad Melpomene !
Through bronzed lyre in tragic order go,
And touch the strings into a mystery ;
Sound mournfully upon the winds and low ;
For simple Isabel is soon to be
Among the dead : She withers, like a palm
Cut by an Indian for its juicy balm.

LVII.

O leave the palm to wither by itself ;
Let not quick Winter chill its dying hour !—
It may not be—those B  alites of pelf,
Her brethren, noted the continual shower
From her dead eyes ; and many a curious elf,
Among her kindred, wonder'd that such dower
Of youth and beauty should be thrown aside
By one mark'd out to be a Noble's bride.

LVIII.

And, furthermore, her brethren wonder'd much
Why she sat drooping by the Basil green,
And why it flourish'd, as by magic touch ;
Greatly they wonder'd what the thing might mean :
They could not surely give belief, that such
A very nothing would have power to wean
Her from her own fair youth, and pleasures gay,
And even remembrance of her love's delay.

LIX.

Therefore they watch'd a time when they might sift
This hidden whim ; and long they watch'd in vain ;
For seldom did she go to chapel-shrift,
And seldom felt she any hunger-pain ;
And when she left, she hurried back, as swift
As bird on wing to breast its eggs again ;
And, patient as a hen-bird, sat her there
Beside her Basil, weeping through her hair.

LX.

Yet they contriv'd to steal the Basil-pot,
And to examine it in secret place :
The thing was vile with green and livid spot,
And yet they knew it was Lorenzo's face :
The guerdon of their murder they had got,
And so left Florence in a moment's space,
Never to turn again.—Away they went,
With blood upon their heads, to banishment.

LXI.

O Melancholy, turn thine eyes away !
O Music, Music, breathe despondingly !
O Echo, Echo, on some other day,
From isles Lethean, sigh to us—O sigh !
Spirits of grief, sing not your “ Well-a-way ! ”
For Isabel, sweet Isabel, will die ;
Will die a death too lone and incomplete,
Now they have ta'en away her Basil sweet.

LXII.

Piteous she look'd on dead and senseless things,
Asking for her lost Basil amorously ;
And with melodious chuckle in the strings
Of her lorn voice, she oftentimes would cry
After the Pilgrim in his wanderings,
To ask him where her Basil was ; and why
'Twas hid from her : " For cruel 'tis," said she,
" To steal my Basil-pot away from me."

LXIII.

And so she pined, and so she died forlorn,
Imploring for her Basil to the last.
No heart was there in Florence but did mourn
In pity of her love, so overcast.
And a sad ditty of this story born
From mouth to mouth through all the country pass'd :
Still is the burthen sung—" O cruelty,
" To steal my Basil-pot away from me !"

THE
EVE OF ST. AGNES.

THE
EVE OF ST. AGNES.

I.

ST. AGNES' Eve—Ah, bitter chill it was !
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold ;
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold :
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he
saith.

II.

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man ;
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees :
The sculptur'd dead, on each side, seem to freeze,
Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails :
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by ; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

III.

Northward he turneth through a little door,
 And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue
 Flatter'd to tears this aged man and poor ;
 But no—already had his deathbell rung ;
 The joys of all his life were said and sung :
 His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve :
 Another way he went, and soon among
 Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
 And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.*

IV.

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft ;
 And so it chanc'd, for many a door was wide,
 From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
 The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide :
 The level chambers, ready with their pride,
 Were glowing to receive a thousand guests :
 The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,
 Star'd, where upon their heads the cornice rests,
 With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on
 their breasts.

* After stanza iii. the following appears in Woodhouse's transcript :—

IV.

But there are ears may hear sweet melodies,
 And there are eyes to brighten festivals,
 And there are feet for nimble minstrelsies,
 And many a lip that for the red wine calls—
 Follow, then follow to the illumined halls,
 Follow me youth—and leave the eremite—
 Give him a tear—then trophied bannerals
 And many a brilliant rasseling of light
 Shall droop from arched ways this high baronial night.

V.

At length burst in the argent revelry,
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows haunting fairily
The brain, new stuff'd, in youth, with triumphs gay
Of old romance. These let us wish away,
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
On love, and wing'd St. Agnes' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

VI.

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honey'd middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did aright ;
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white ;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

VII.

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline :
The music, yearning like a God in pain,
She scarcely heard : her maiden eyes divine,
Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
Pass by—she heeded not at all : in vain

Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
And back retir'd : not cool'd by high disdain,
But she saw not : her heart was elsewhere :
She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

VIII.

She danc'd along with vague, regardless eyes,
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short :
The hallow'd hour was near at hand : she sighs
Amid the timbrels, and the throng'd resort
Of whisperers in anger, or in sport ;
'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
Hoodwink'd with faery fancy ; all amort,
Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

IX.

So, purposing each moment to retire,
She linger'd still. Meantime, across the moors,
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire
For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he, and implores
All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
But for one moment in the tedious hours,
That he might gaze and worship all unseen ;
Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such
things have been.

X.

He ventures in : let no buzz'd whisper tell :
All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel :

For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,
Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
Whose very dogs would execrations howl
Against his lineage : not one breast affords
Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

XI.

Ab, happy chance ! the aged creature came,
Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
The sound of merriment and chorus bland :
He startled her ; but soon she knew his face,
And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied hand,
Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro ! hie thee from this place ;
"They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty
race !

XII.

"Get hence ! get hence ! there's dwarfish Hilde-
brand ;
"He had a fever late, and in the fit
"He cursed thee and thine, both house and land :
"Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
"More tame for his gray hairs—Alas me ! flit !
"Flit like a ghost away."—"Ah, Gossip dear,
"We're safe enough ; here in this arm-chair sit,
"And tell me how"—"Good Saints ! not here,
not here ;
"Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy
bier."

XIII.

He follow'd through a lowly arched way,
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume,
And as she mutter'd "Well-a—well-a-day!"
He found him in a little moonlight room,
Pale, lattic'd, chill, and silent as a tomb.
"Now tell me where is Madeline," said he,
"O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom
Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously."

XIV.

"St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve—
"Yet men will murder upon holy days:
"Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,
"And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,
"To venture so: it fills me with amaze
"To see thee, Porphyro!—St. Agnes' Eve!
"God's help! my lady fair the conjuror plays
"This very night: good angels her deceive!
"But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve."

XV.

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
Who keepeth clos'd a wond'rous riddle-book,
As spectacl'd she sits in chimney nook.

But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
His lady's purpose ; and he scarce could brook
Tears, at the thought of those enchantments
 cold,
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

XVI.

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart
Made purple riot : then doth he propose
A stratagem, that makes the beldame start :
“ A cruel man and impious thou art :
“ Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream
“ Alone with her good angels, far apart
“ From wicked men like thee. Go, go !—I deem
“ Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst
 seem.”

XVII.

“ I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,”
Quoth Porphyro : “ O may I ne'er find grace
“ When my weak voice shall whisper its last
 prayer,
“ If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
“ Or look with ruffian passion in her face :
“ Good Angela, believe me by these tears ;
“ Or I will, even in a moment's space,
“ Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,
“ And beard them, though they be more fang'd than
 wolves and bears.”

XVIII.

“Ah ! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul ?
“A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing,
“Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll ;
“Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,
“Were never miss'd.”—Thus plaining, doth she
bring

A gentler speech from burning Porphyro ;
So woful, and of such deep sorrowing,
That Angela gives promise she will do
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

XIX.

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
Him in a closet, of such privacy
That he might see her beauty unespied,
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
While legion'd fairies pac'd the coverlet,
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.
Never on such a night have lovers met,
Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

XX.

“It shall be as thou wishest,” said the Dame :
“All cates and dainties shall be stored there
“Quickly on this feast-night : by the tambour frame
“Her own lute thou wilt see : no time to spare,
“For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare

“On such a catering trust my dizzy head.

“Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer

“The while : Ah ! thou must needs the lady wed,

“Or may I never leave my grave among the dead.”

XXI.

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.

The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd ;

The dame return'd, and whisper'd in his ear

To follow her ; with aged eyes aghast

From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,

Through many a dusky gallery, they gain

The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd, and chaste ;

Where Porphyro took covert, pleas'd amain.

His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

XXII.

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade,

Old Angela was feeling for the stair,

When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmed maid,

Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware :

With silver taper's light, and pious care,

She turn'd, and down the aged gossip led

To a safe level matting. Now prepare,

Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed ;

She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove fray'd
and fled.

XXIII.

Out went the taper as she hurried in ;
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died :
She clos'd the door, she panted, all akin
To spirits of the air, and visions wide :
No uttered syllable, or, woe betide !
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
Paining with eloquence her balmy side ;
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

XXIV.

A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,
All garlanded with carven imag'ries
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings ;
And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens
and kings.

XXV.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and
boon ;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,

And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint :
She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
Save wings, for heaven :—Porphyro grew faint :
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

XXVI.

Anon his heart revives : her vespers done,
Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees ;
Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one ;
Loosens her fragrant boddice ; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees :
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is
fled.

XXVII.

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,
Until the poppi'd warmth of sleep oppress'd
Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away ;
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day ;
Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain ;
Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims
pray ;
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud
again.

XXVIII.

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,
Porphyro gaz'd upon her empty dress,
And listen'd to her breathing, if it chanced
To wake into a slumberous tenderness ;
Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
And breath'd himself : then from the closet crept,
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
And over the hush'd carpet, silent, stept,
And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo !—how fast
she slept.

XXIX.

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
A table, and, half anguish'd, threw thereon
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet :—
O for some drowsy Morphean amulet !
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone :—
The hall door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

XXX.

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanched linen, smooth, and lavender'd,
While he from forth the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd ;
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,

And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon ;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
From Fez ; and spiced dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon.

XXXI.

These delicacies he heap'd with glowing hand
On golden dishes and in baskets bright
Of wreathed silver : sumptuous they stand
In the retired quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with perfume light.—
“ And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake !
“ Thou art my heaven, and I thine hermit :
“ Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,
“ Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache.”

XXXII.

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved arm
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
By the dusk curtains :—'twas a midnight charm
Impossible to melt as iced stream :
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam ;
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies :
It seem'd he never, never could redeem
From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes ;
So mus'd awhile, entoil'd in woofed phantasies.

XXXIII.

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—
Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tenderest be,
He play'd an ancient ditty, long since mute,

In Provence call'd, "La belle dame sans mercy :"
Close to her ear touching the melody ;—
Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a soft moan :
He ceased—she panted quick—and suddenly
Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone :
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured
stone.

XXXIV.

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep :
There was a painful change, that nigh expell'd
The blisses of her dream so pure and deep,
At which fair Madeline began to weep,
And moan forth witless words with many a sigh ;
While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep ;
Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye,
Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dreamingly.

XXXV.

"Ah, Porphyro !" said she, "but even now
"Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
"Made tuneable with every sweetest vow ;
"And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear :
"How chang'd thou art ! how pallid, chill, and
drear !
"Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
"Those looks immortal, those complainings dear !
"Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
"For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go."

XXXVI.

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star
Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose ;
Into her dream he melted, as the rose
Blendeth its odour with the violet,—
Solution sweet : meantime the frost-wind blows
Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
Against the window-panes ; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

XXXVII.

'Tis dark : quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet :
" This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline ! "
'Tis dark : the iced gusts still rave and beat :
" No dream, alas ! alas ! and woe is mine !
" Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.—
" Cruel ! what traitor could thee hither bring ?
" I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
" Though thou forsakest a deceived thing ;—
" A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned wing."

XXXVIII.

" My Madeline ! sweet dreamer ! lovely bride !
" Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest ?
" Thy beauty's shield, heart-shap'd and vermeil
dyed ?
" Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
" After so many hours of toil and quest,

“A famish’d pilgrim,—saved by miracle.
“Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest
“Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think’st well
“To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

XXXIX.

“Hark! ’tis an elfin-storm from faery land,
“Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed :
“Arise—arise! the morning is at hand ;—
“The bloated wassaillers will never heed :—
“Let us away, my love, with happy speed ;
“There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—
“Drown’d all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead :
“Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,
“For o’er the southern moors I have a home for thee.”

XL.

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
For there were sleeping dragons all around.
At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears—
Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found.—
In all the house was heard no human sound.
A chain-droop’d lamp was flickering by each door ;
The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,
Flutter’d in the besieging wind’s uproar ;
And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

XLI.

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall ;
Like phantoms, to the iron porch, they glide ;
Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,

With a huge empty flaggon by his side :
The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns :
By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide :—
The chains lie silent on the footworn stones ;—
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

XLII.

And they are gone : ay, ages long ago
These lovers fled away into the storm.
That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
Were long be-nightmar'd. Angela the old
Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face deform ;
The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
For aye unsought for slept among his ashes cold.

POEMS

POEMS.

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE.

I.

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk :
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness,—
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

II.

O, for a draught of vintage ! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth !
O for a breaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth ;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim :

III.

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan ;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies ;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

IV.

Away ! away ! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards :
Already with thee ! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays ;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy
ways.

V.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows

The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild ;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine ;
Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves ;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

VI.

Darkling I listen ; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath ;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy !
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

VII.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird !
No hungry generations tread thee down ;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown :
Perhaps the self-same song hath found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn ;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

VIII.

Forlorn ! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self !
Adieu ! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu ! adieu ! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side ; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades :
Was it a vision, or a waking dream ?
Fled is that music :—Do I wake or sleep ?

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN.

I.

THOU still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme :
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady ?
What men or gods are these ? What maidens
loth ?
What mad pursuit ? What struggle to escape ?
What pipes and timbrels ? What wild ecstasy ?

II.

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter ; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on ;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone :
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare ;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve ;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair !

III.

Ah, happy, happy boughs ! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu ;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new ;
More happy love ! more happy, happy love !
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
For ever panting, and for ever young ;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

IV.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice ?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest ?

What little town by river or sea shore,
 Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
 Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
 And, little town, thy streets for evermore
 Will silent be ; and not a soul to tell
 Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

V.

O Attic shape ! Fair attitude ! with brede
 Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
 With forest branches and the trodden weed ;
 Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
 As doth eternity : Cold Pastoral !
 When old age shall this generation waste,
 Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
 "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

ODE TO PSYCHE.

O GODDESS ! hear these tuneless numbers, wrung
 By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,
 And pardon that thy secrets should be sung
 Even into thine own soft-conched ear :
 Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see
 The winged Psyche with awaken'd eyes ?
 I wander'd in a forest thoughtlessly,
 And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise,

Saw two fair creatures, couched side by side
In deepest grass, beneath the whisp'ring roof 10
Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran
A brooklet, scarce espied :

'Mid hush'd, cool-rooted flowers, fragrant-eyed,
Blue, silver-white, and budded Tyrian,
They lay calm-breathing, on the bedded grass ; 15
Their arms embraced, and their pinions too ;
Their lips touch'd not, but had not bade adieu,
As if disjoined by soft-handed slumber,
And ready still past kisses to outnumber
At tender eye-dawn of aurorean love : 20
The winged boy I knew ;
But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove ?
His Psyche true !

O latest born and loveliest vision far
Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy ! 25
Fairer than Phœbe's sapphire-region'd star,
Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the sky ;
Fairer than these, though temple thou hast none,
Nor altar heap'd with flowers ;
Nor virgin-choir to make delicious moan 30
Upon the midnight hours ;
No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet
From chain-swung censer teeming ;
No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat
Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming. 35

O brightest ! though too late for antique vows,

Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,

When holy were the haunted forest boughs,

Holy the air, the water, and the fire ;

Yet even in these days so far retir'd

40

From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,

Fluttering among the faint Olympians,

I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspired.

So let me be thy choir, and make a moan

Upon the midnight hours ;

45

Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet

From swung censer teeming ;

Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat

Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane

50

In some untrodden region of my mind,

Where branched thoughts, new grown with pleasant
pain,

Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind :

Far, far around shall those dark-cluster'd trees

Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep ;

55

And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and
bees,

The moss-lain Dryads shall be lull'd to sleep ;

And in the midst of this wide quietness

A rosy sanctuary will I dress

With the wreath'd trellis of a working brain,

60

With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,

With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,

Who breeding flowers, will never breed the same :

And there shall be for thee all soft delight
 That shadowy thought can win,
 A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
 To let the warm Love in !

65

FANCY.

EVER let the Fancy roam,
 Pleasure never is at home :
 At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,
 Like to bubbles when rain pelteth ;
 Then let winged Fancy wander
 Through the thought still spread beyond her :
 Open wide the mind's cage-door,
 She'll dart forth, and cloudward soar.
 O sweet Fancy ! let her loose ;
 Summer's joys are spoilt by use,
 And the enjoying of the Spring
 Fades as does its blossoming ;
 Autumn's red-lipp'd fruitage too,
 Blushing through the mist and dew,
 Cloys with tasting : What do then ?
 Sit thee by the ingle, when
 The sear faggot blazes bright,
 Spirit of a winter's night ;
 When the soundless earth is muffled,
 And the caked snow is shuffled
 From the ploughboy's heavy shoon ;
 When the Night doth meet the Noon

5

10

15

20

In a dark conspiracy
To banish Even from her sky.
Sit thee there, and send abroad, 25
With a mind self-overaw'd,
Fancy, high-commission'd :—send her !
She has vassals to attend her :
She will bring, in spite of frost,
Beauties that the earth hath lost ; 30
She will bring thee, all together,
All delights of summer weather ;
All the buds and bells of May,
From dewy sward or thorny spray ;
All the heaped Autumn's wealth, 35
With a still, mysterious stealth :
She will mix these pleasures up
Like three fit wines in a cup,
And thou shalt quaff it :—thou shalt hear
Distant harvest-carols clear ; 40
Rustle of the reaped corn ;
Sweet birds antheming the morn :
And, in the same moment—hark !
'Tis the early April lark,
Or the rooks, with busy caw, 45
Foraging for sticks and straw.
Thou shalt, at one glance, behold
The daisy and the marigold ;
White-plum'd lilies, and the first
Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst ; 50
Shaded hyacinth, alway
Sapphire queen of the mid-May ;
And every leaf, and every flower

Pearled with the self-same shower.
 Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep 86
 Meagre from its celled sleep ;
 And the snake all winter-thin
 Cast on sunny bank its skin ;
 Freckled nest-eggs thou shalt see
 Hatching in the hawthorn-tree, 90
 When the hen-bird's wing doth rest
 Quiet on her mossy nest ;
 Then the hurry and alarm
 When the bee-hive casts its swarm ;
 Acorns right down-pattering, 95
 While the autumn breezes sing.*

Oh, sweet Fancy ! let her loose ;
 Every thing is spoilt by use :
 Where's the cheek that doth not fade,
 Too much gaz'd at ? Where's the maid 70
 Whose lip mature is ever new ?
 Where's the eye, however blue,
 Doth not weary ? Where's the face
 One would meet in every place ?
 Where's the voice, however soft, 75
 One would hear so very oft ?
 At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth
 Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.

* After this line the following couplet appears in the manuscript :—

For the same sleek-throated mouse
 To store up in its winter house.

Let, then, winged Fancy find
 Thee a mistress to thy mind : 80
 Dulcet-eyed as Ceres' daughter,
 Ere the God of Torment taught her
 How to frown and how to chide ;
 With a waist and with a side
 White as Hebe's, when her zone 85
 Slipt its golden clasp, and down
 Fell her kirtle to her feet,
 While she held the goblet sweet,
 And Jove grew languid.—Break the mesh
 Of the Fancy's silken leash ; 90
 Quickly break her prison-string *
 And such joys as these she'll bring—
 Let the winged Fancy roam,
 Pleasure never is at home.

* Lines 89-91 represent this passage in the manuscript :—

And Jove grew languid. Mistress fair !
 Thou shalt have that tressed hair
 Adonis tangled all for spite,
 And the mouth he would not kiss
 And the treasure he would miss ;
 And the hand he would not press,
 And the warmth he would distress.
 O the ravishment—the bliss—
 Fancy has her—there she is !
 Never fulsome—ever new
 There she steps ! and tell me who
 Has a mistress so divine ?
 Be the palate ne'er so fine
 She cannot sicken. Break the mesh
 Of the Fancy's silken leash
 Where she's tether'd to the heart—
 Quick break her prison string. . . .

ODE.

BARDS of Passion and of Mirth,
 Ye have left your souls on earth !
 Have ye souls in heaven too,
 Double-lived in regions new ?
 Yes, and those of heaven commune 5
 With the spheres of sun and moon ;
 With the noise of fountains wond'rous,
 And the parle of voices thund'rous ;
 With the whisper of heaven's trees
 And one another, in soft ease 10
 Seated on Elysian lawns
 Brows'd by none but Dian's fawns ;
 Underneath large blue-bells tented,
 Where the daisies are rose-scented,
 And the rose herself has got 15
 Perfume which on earth is not ;
 Where the nightingale doth sing
 Not a senseless, tranced thing,
 But divine melodious truth ;
 Philosophic numbers smooth ; 20
 Tales and golden histories
 Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then
 On the earth ye live again ;
 And the souls ye left behind you 25
 Teach us, here, the way to find you,

Where your other souls are joying,
 Never slumber'd, never cloying.
 Here, your earth-born souls still speak
 To mortals, of their little week ; 30
 Of their sorrows and delights ;
 Of their passions and their spite ;
 Of their glory and their shame ;
 What doth strengthen and what maim.
 Thus ye teach us, every day, 35
 Wisdom, though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
 Ye have left your souls on earth !
 Ye have souls in heaven too,
 Double-lived in regions new ! 40

LINES ON THE MERMAID TAVERN.

SOULS of Poets dead and gone,
 What Elysium have ye known,
 Happy field or mossy cavern,
 Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern ?
 Have ye tippled drink more fine 5
 Than mine host's Canary wine ?
 Or are fruits of Paradise
 Sweeter than those dainty pies
 Of venison ? O generous food !
 Drest as though bold Robin Hood 10
 Would, with his maid Marian,
 Sup and bowse from horn and can.

I have heard that on a day
Mine host's sign-board flew away,
Nobody knew whither, till 15
An astrologer's old quill
To a sheepskin gave the story,
Said he saw you in your glory,
Underneath a new old-sign
Sipping beverage divine, 20
And pledging with contented smack
The Mermaid in the Zodiac.

Souls of Poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern, 25
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern ?

ROBIN HOOD.

TO A FRIEND.

No ! those days are gone away,
And their hours are old and gray,
And their minutes buried all
Under the down-trodden pall
Of the leaves of many years : 5
Many times have winter's shears,
Frozen North, and chilling East,
Sounded tempests to the feast
Of the forest's whispering fleeces,
Since men knew nor rent nor leases. 10

No, the bugle sounds no more,
And the twanging bow no more ;
Silent is the ivory shrill
Past the heath and up the hill ;
There is no mid-forest laugh,
Where lone Echo gives the half
To some wight, amaz'd to hear
Jesting, deep in forest drear.

16

On the fairest time of June
You may go, with sun or moon,
Or the seven stars to light you,
Or the polar ray to right you ;
But you never may behold
Little John, or Robin bold ;
Never one, of all the clan,
Thrumming on an empty can
Some old hunting ditty, while
He doth his green way beguile
To fair hostess Merriment,
Down beside the pasture Trent ;
For he left the merry tale
Messenger for spicy ale.

20

25

30

Gone, the merry morris din ;
Gone, the song of Gamelyn ;
Gone, the tough-belted outlaw
Idling in the "grenè shawe ;"
All are gone away and past !
And if Robin should be cast

35

Sudden from his turfed grave,
And if Marian should have 40
Once again her forest days,
She would weep, and he would craze :
He would swear, for all his oaks,
Fall'n beneath the dockyard strokes,
Have rotted on the briny seas ; 45
She would weep that her wild bees
Sang not to her—strange ! that honey
Can't be got without hard money !

So it is : yet let us sing,
Honour to the old bow-string ! 50
Honour to the bugle-horn !
Honour to the woods unshorn !
Honour to the Lincoln green !
Honour to the archer keen !
Honour to tight little John, 55
And the horse he rode upon !
Honour to bold Robin Hood,
Sleeping in the underwood !
Honour to maid Marian,
And to all the Sherwood-clan ! 60
Though their days have hurried by
Let us two a burden try.

TO AUTUMN.

I.

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun ;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves
run ;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core ;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel ; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

II.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store ?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind ;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers :
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook ;
Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozy hours by hours.

III.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?

Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—

While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,

And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue ;

Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn

Among the river sallows, borne aloft

Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies ;

And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn ;

Hedge-cricket sing ; and now with treble soft

The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft ;

And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

ODE ON MELANCHOLY.*

I.

No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist

Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine ;

Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss'd

By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine ;

* According to Lord Houghton, the following stanza, the intended opening of the Ode, was rejected from the original manuscript :—

Though you should build a bark of dead men's bones,

And rear a phantom gibbet for a mast,

Stitch shrouds together for a sail, with groans

To fill it out, blood-stained and aghast ;

Although your rudder be a dragon's tail

Long sever'd, yet still hard with agony,

Your cordage large uprootings from the skull

Of bald Medusa, certes you would fail

To find the Melancholy—whether she

Dreameth in any isle of Lethe dull.

Make not your rosary of yew-berries,
Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be
Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl
A partner in your sorrow's mysteries ;
For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

II.

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,
That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
And hides the green hill in an April shroud ;
Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
Or on the wealth of globed peonies ;
Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

III.

She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die ;
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
Bidding adieu ; and aching Pleasure nigh,
Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips :
Ay, in the very temple of Delight
Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
Though seen of none save him whose strenuous
tongue
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine ;
His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

HYPERION.

A FRAGMENT.

HYPERION.

BOOK I.

DEEP in the shady sadness of a vale
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,
Sat gray-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone,
Still as the silence round about his lair ; 5
Forest on forest hung about his head
Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,
Not so much life as on a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest. 10
A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more
By reason of his fallen divinity
Spreading a shade : the Naiad 'mid her reeds
Press'd her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large foot-marks went, 15
No further than to where his feet had stray'd,
And slept there since. Upon the sodden ground
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,
Unsceptred ; and his realmless eyes were closed ;

While his bow'd head seem'd list'ning to the Earth, 20
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.*

It seem'd no force could wake him from his place ;
But there came one, who with a kindred hand
Touch'd his wide shoulders, after bending low
With reverence, though to one who knew it not. 25
She was a Goddess of the infant world ;
By her in stature the tall Amazon
Had stood a pigmy's height : she would have ta'en
Achilles by the hair and bent his neck ;
Or with a finger stay'd Ixion's wheel. 30
Her face was large as that of Memphian sphinx,
Pedestal'd haply in a palace court,
When sages look'd to Egypt for their lore.
But oh ! how unlike marble was that face :
How beautiful, if sorrow had not made 35
Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self.
There was a listening fear in her regard,
As if calamity had but begun ;
As if the vanward clouds of evil days
Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear 40
Was with its stored thunder labouring up.
One hand she press'd upon that aching spot
Where beats the human heart, as if just there,

* The following cancelled lines occur at this point in
Woodhouse's transcript of the poem :—

Thus the old Eagle, drowsy with great grief,
Sat moulting his weak plumage, never more
To be restored or soar against the sun ;
While his three sons upon Olympus stood.

Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain :
The other upon Saturn's bended neck 45
She laid, and to the level of his ear
Leaning with parted lips, some words she spake
In solemn tenour and deep organ tone :
Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue
Would come in these like accents ; O how frail 50
To that large utterance of the early Gods !
" Saturn, look up !—though wherefore, poor old King ?
" I have no comfort for thee, no not one :
" I cannot say, ' O wherefore sleepest thou ?'
" For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth 55
" Knows thee not, thus afflicted, for a God ;
" And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,
" Has from thy sceptre pass'd ; and all the air
" Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.
" Thy thunder, conscious of the new command, 60
" Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house ;
" And thy sharp lightning in unpractised hands
" Scorches and burns our once serene domain.
" O aching time ! O moments big as years !
" All as ye pass swell out the monstrous truth, 65
" And press it so upon our weary griefs
" That unbelief has not a space to breathe.
" Saturn, sleep on :—O thoughtless, why did I
" Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude ?
" Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes ? 70
" Saturn, sleep on ! while at thy feet I weep."

As when, upon a tranced summer-night,
Those green-rob'd senators of mighty woods,

Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,
Dream, and so dream all night without a stir, 75
Save from one gradual solitary gust
Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,
As if the ebbing air had but one wave ;
So came these words and went ; the while in tears
She touch'd her fair large forehead to the ground, 84
Just where her falling hair might be outspread
A soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet.
One moon, with alteration slow, had shed
Her silver seasons four upon the night,
And still these two were postured motionless, 85
Like natural sculpture in cathedral cavern ;
The frozen God still couchant on the earth,
And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet :
Until at length old Saturn lifted up
His faded eyes, and saw his kingdom gone, 90
And all the gloom and sorrow of the place.
And that fair kneeling Goddess ; and then spake,
As with a palsied tongue, and while his beard
Shook horrid with such aspen-malady :
“ O tender spouse of gold Hyperion, 95
“ Thea, I feel thee ere I see thy face ;
“ Look up, and let me see our doom in it ;
“ Look up, and tell me if this feeble shape
“ Is Saturn's ; tell me, if thou hear'st the voice
“ Of Saturn ; tell me, if this wrinkling brow, 100
“ Naked and bare of its great diadem,
“ Peers like the front of Saturn. Who had power
“ To make me desolate ? whence came the strength ?
“ How was it nurtur'd to such bursting forth,

“While Fate seem’d strangled in my nervous grasp? 105
“But it is so; and I am smother’d up,
“And buried from all godlike exercise
“Of influence benign on planets pale,
“Of admonitions to the winds and seas,
“Of peaceful sway above man’s harvesting, 110
“And all those acts which Deity supreme
“Doth ease its heart of love in.—I am gone
“Away from my own bosom: I have left
“My strong identity, my real self,
“Somewhere between the throne, and where I sit 115
“Here on this spot of earth. Search, Thea, search!
“Open thine eyes eterne, and sphere them round
“Upon all space: space starr’d, and lorn of light;
“Space region’d with life-air; and barren void;
“Spaces of fire, and all the yawn of hell.— 120
“Search, Thea, search! and tell me, if thou seest
“A certain shape or shadow, making way
“With wings or chariot fierce to repossess
“A heaven he lost erewhile: it must—it must
“Be of ripe progress—Saturn must be King. 125
“Yes, there must be a golden victory;
“There must be Gods thrown down, and trumpets
 blown
“Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival
“Upon the gold clouds metropolitan,
“Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir 130
“Of strings in hollow shells; and there shall be
“Beautiful things made new, for the surprise
“Of the sky-children; I will give command:
“Thea! Thea! Thea! where is Saturn?”

This passion lifted him upon his feet, 135
And made his hands to struggle in the air,
His Druid locks to shake and ooze with sweat,
His eyes to fever out, his voice to cease.
He stood, and heard not Thea's sobbing deep ;
A little time, and then again he snatch'd 140
Utterance thus.—“ But cannot I create ?
“ Cannot I form ? Cannot I fashion forth
“ Another world, another universe,
“ To overbear and crumble this to nought ?
“ Where is another chaos ? Where ? ”—That word 145
Found way unto Olympus, and made quake
The rebel three.—Thea was startled up,
And in her bearing was a sort of hope,
As thus she quick-voic'd spake, yet full of awe.

“ This cheers our fallen house : come to our friends,
“ O Saturn ! come away, and give them heart ; 151
“ I know the covert, for thence came I hither.”
Thus brief ; then with beseeching eyes she went
With backward footing through the shade a space :
He follow'd, and she turn'd to lead the way 155
Through aged boughs, that yielded like the mist
Which eagles cleave upmounting from their nest.

Meanwhile in other realms big tears were shed,
More sorrow like to this, and such like woe,
Too huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe : 160
The Titans fierce, self-hid, or prison-bound,
Groan'd for the old allegiance once more,
And listen'd in sharp pain for Saturn's voice.

But one of the whole mammoth-brood still kept
His sov'reignty, and rule, and majesty ;— 165
Blazing Hyperion on his orb'd fire
Still sat, still snuff'd the incense, teeming up
From man to the sun's God ; yet unsecure :
For as among us mortals omens drear
Fright and perplex, so also shuddered he— 170
Not at dog's howl, or gloom-bird's hated screech,
Or the familiar visiting of one
Upon the first toll of his passing-bell,
Or prophesyings of the midnight lamp ;
But horrors, portion'd to a giant nerve, 175
Oft made Hyperion ache. His palace bright
Bastion'd with pyramids of glowing gold,
And touch'd with shade of bronzed obelisks,
Glar'd a blood-red through all its thousand courts,
Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries ; 180
And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds
Flush'd angrily : while sometimes eagle's wings,
Unseen before by Gods or wondering men,
Darken'd the place ; and neighing steeds were heard,
Not heard before by Gods or wondering men. 185
Also, when he would taste the spicy wreaths
Of incense, breath'd aloft from sacred hills,
Instead of sweets, his ample palate took
Savour of poisonous brass and metal sick :
And so, when harbour'd in the sleepy west, 190
After the full completion of fair day,—
For rest divine upon exalted couch
And slumber in the arms of melody,
He pac'd away the pleasant hours of ease

With stride colossal, on from hall to hall ; 195
While far within each aisle and deep recess,
His winged minions in close clusters stood,
Amaz'd and full of fear ; like anxious men
Who on wide plains gather in panting troops,
When earthquakes jar their battlements and towers. 200
Even now, while Saturn, rous'd from icy trance,
Went step for step with Thea through the woods,
Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,
Came slope upon the threshold of the west ;
Then, as was wont, his palace-door flew ope * 205
In smoothest silence, save what solemn tubes,
Blown by the serious Zephyrs, gave of sweet
And wandering sounds, slow-breathed melodies ;
And like a rose in vermeil tint and shape,
In fragrance soft, and coolness to the eye, 210
That inlet to severe magnificence
Stood full blown, for the God to enter in.

He enter'd, but he enter'd full of wrath ;
His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels,
And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire, 215
That scar'd away the meek ethereal Hours
And made their dove-wings tremble. On he flared,
From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,
Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light,
And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades, 220

* This line is succeeded in Woodhouse's transcript by
the following :—

Most like a rose-bud to a fairy's lute.

Until he reach'd the great main cupola ;
There standing fierce beneath, he stampt his foot,
And from the basements deep to the high towers
Jarr'd his own golden region ; and before
The quavering thunder thereupon had ceas'd, 225
His voice leapt out, despite of godlike curb,
To this result : " O dreams of day and night !
" O monstrous forms ! O effigies of pain !
" O spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom !
" O lank-eared Phantoms of black-weeded pools !
" Why do I know ye ? why have I seen ye ? why
" Is my eternal essence thus distraught
" To see and to behold these horrors new ?
" Saturn is fallen, am I too to fall ?
" Am I to leave this haven of my rest, 235
" This cradle of my glory, this soft clime,
" This calm luxuriance of blissful light,
" These crystalline pavilions, and pure fanes,
" Of all my lucent empire ? It is left
" Deserted, void, nor any haunt of mine. 240
" The blaze, the splendor, and the symmetry,
" I cannot see—but darkness, death and darkness.
" Even here, into my centre of repose,
" The shady visions come to domineer,
" Insult, and blind, and stifle up my pomp.— 245
" Fall !—No, by Tellus and her briny robes !
" Over the fiery frontier of my realms
" I will advance a terrible right arm
" Shall scare that infant thunderer, rebel Jove,
" And bid old Saturn take his throne again." 250
He spake, and ceas'd, the while a heavier threat

Held struggle with his throat but came not forth ;
For as in theatres of crowded men
Hubbub increases more they call out "Hush !" 255
So at Hyperion's words the Phantoms pale
Bestirr'd themselves, thrice horrible and cold ;
And from the mirror'd level where he stood
A mist arose, as from a scummy marsh.
At this, through all his bulk an agony
Crept gradual, from the feet unto the crown, 260
Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular
Making slow way, with head and neck convuls'd
From overstrained might. Releas'd, he fled
To the eastern gates, and full six dewy hours
Before the dawn in season due should blush, 265
He breath'd fierce breath against the sleepy portals,
Clear'd them of heavy vapours, burst them wide
Suddenly on the ocean's chilly streams.
The planet orb of fire, whereon he rode
Each day from east to west the heavens through, 270
Spun round in sable curtaining of clouds ;
Not therefore veiled quite, blindfold, and hid,
But ever and anon the glancing spheres,
Circles, and arcs, and broad-belting colure,
Glow'd through, and wrought upon the muffling
 dark 275
Sweet-shaped lightnings from the nadir deep
Up to the zenith,—hieroglyphics old,
Which sages and keen-eyed astrologers
Then living on the earth, with labouring thought
Won from the gaze of many centuries : 280
Now lost, save what we find on remnants huge

Of stone, or marble swart ; their import gone,
Their wisdom long since fled.—Two wings this orb
Possess'd for glory, two fair argent wings,
Ever exalted at the God's approach : 235
And now, from forth the gloom their plumes immense
Rose, one by one, till all outspreaded were ;
While still the dazzling globe maintain'd eclipse.
Awaiting for Hyperion's command.
Fain would he have commanded, fain took throne 290
And bid the day begin, if but for change.
He might not :—No, though a primeval God :
The sacred seasons might not be disturb'd.
Therefore the operations of the dawn
Stay'd in their birth, even as here 'tis told. 295
Those silver wings expanded sisterly,
Eager to sail their orb ; the porches wide
Open'd upon the dusk demesnes of night ;
And the bright Titan, phrenzied with new woes,
Unus'd to bend, by hard compulsion bent 300
His spirit to the sorrow of the time ;
And ail along a dismal rack of clouds,
Upon the boundaries of day and night,
He stretch'd himself in grief and radiance faint.
There as he lay, the Heaven with its stars 305
Look'd down on him with pity, and the voice
Of Cœlus, from the universal space,
Thus whisper'd low and solemn in his ear.
“ O brightest of my children dear, earth-born
“ And sky-engendered, Son of Mysteries 310
“ All unrevealed even to the powers
“ Which met at thy creating ; at whose joys

“ And palpitations sweet, and pleasures soft,
“ I, Coelus, wonder, how they came and whence ;
“ And at the fruits thereof what shapes they be, 315
“ Distinct, and visible ; symbols divine,
“ Manifestations of that beauteous life
“ Diffus’d unseen throughout eternal space :
“ Of these new-form’d art thou, oh brightest child !
“ Of these, thy brethren and the Goddesses ! 320
“ There is sad feud among ye, and rebellion
“ Of son against his sire. I saw him fall,
“ I saw my first-born tumbled from his throne !
“ To me his arms were spread, to me his voice
“ Found way from forth the thunders round his head !
“ Pale wox I, and in vapours hid my face. 326
“ Art thou, too, near such doom ? vague fear there is :
“ For I have seen my sons most unlike Gods.
“ Divine ye were created, and divine
“ In sad demeanour, solemn, undisturb’d, 330
“ Unruffled, like high Gods, ye liv’d and rul’d :
“ Now I behold in you fear, hope, and wrath ;
“ Actions of rage and passion ; even as
“ I see them, on the mortal world beneath,
“ In men who die.—This is the grief, O Son ! 335
“ Sad sign of ruin, sudden dismay, and fall !
“ Yet do thou strive ; as thou art capable,
“ As thou canst move about, an evident God ;
“ And canst oppose to each malignant hour
“ Ethereal presence :—I am but a voice ; 340
“ My life is but the life of winds and tides,
“ No more than winds and tides can I avail :—
“ But thou canst.—Be thou therefore in the van

"Of circumstance ; yea, seize the arrow's barb
 "Before the tense string murmur.—To the earth ! 345
 "For there thou wilt find Saturn, and his woes.
 "Meantime I will keep watch on thy bright sun,
 "And of thy seasons be a careful nurse."—
 Ere half this region-whisper had come down,
 Hyperion arose, and on the stars 350
 Lifted his curved lids, and kept them wide
 Until it ceas'd ; and still he kept them wide :
 And still they were the same bright, patient stars.
 Then with a slow incline of his broad breast,
 Like to a diver in the pearly seas, 355
 Forward he stoop'd over the airy shore,
 And plung'd all noiseless into the deep night.

BOOK II.

JUST at the self-same beat of Time's wide wings
 Hyperion slid into the rustled air,
 And Saturn gain'd with Thea that sad place
 Where Cybele and the bruised Titans mourn'd.
 It was a den where no insulting light 5
 Could glimmer on their tears ; where their own groans
 They felt, but heard not, for the solid roar
 Of thunderous waterfalls and torrents hoarse,
 Pouring a constant bulk, uncertain where.
 Crag jutting forth to crag, and rocks that seem'd 10
 Ever as if just rising from a sleep,
 Forehead to forehead held their monstrous horns ;

And thus in thousand hugest phantasies
Made a fit roofing to this nest of woe.
Instead of thrones, hard flint they sat upon, 15
Couches of rugged stone, and slaty ridge
Stubborn'd with iron. All were not assembled :
Some chain'd in torture, and some wandering.
Cœus, and Gyges, and Briareüs,
Typhon, and Dolor, and Porphyryon, 20
With many more, the brawniest in assault,
Were pent in regions of laborious breath ;
Dungeon'd in opaque element, to keep
Their clenched teeth still clench'd, and all their limbs
Lock'd up like veins of metal, cramp't and screw'd ; 25
Without a motion, save of their big hearts
Heaving in pain, and horribly convuls'd
With sanguine feverous boiling gurge of pulse.
Mnemosyne was straying in the world ;
Far from her moon had Phœbe wandered ; 30
And many else were free to roam abroad,
But for the main, here found they covert drear.
Scarce images of life, one here, one there,
Lay vast and edgeways ; like a dismal cirque
Of Druid stones, upon a forlorn moor, 35
When the chill rain begins at shut of eve,
In dull November, and their chancel vault,
The Heaven itself, is blinded throughout night.
Each one kept shroud, nor to his neighbour gave
Or word, or look, or action of despair. 40
Creüs was one ; his ponderous iron mace
Lay by him, and a shatter'd rib of rock
Told of his rage, ere he thus sank and pined.

Iapetus another ; in his grasp,
A serpent's plashy neck ; its barbed tongue 45
Squeez'd from the gorge, and all its uncurl'd length
Dead ; and because the creature could not spit
Its poison in the eyes of conquering Jove.
Next Cottus : prone he lay, chin uppermost,
As though in pain ; for still upon the flint 50
He ground severe his skull, with open mouth
And eyes at horrid working. Nearest him
Asia, born of most enormous Caf,
Who cost her mother Tellus keener pangs,
Though feminine, than any of her sons : 55
More thought than woe was in her dusky face,
For she was prophesying of her glory ;
And in her wide imagination stood
Palm-shaded temples, and high rival fanes,
By Oxus or in Ganges' sacred isles. 60
Even as Hope upon her anchor leans,
So leant she, not so fair, upon a tusk
Shed from the broadest of her elephants.
Above her, on a crag's uneasy shelf,
Upon his elbow rais'd, all prostrate else, 65
Shadow'd Enceladus ; once tame and mild
As grazing ox unworried in the meads !
Now tiger-passion'd, lion-thoughted, wroth.
He meditated, plotted, and even now
Was hurling mountains in that second war, 70
Not long delay'd, that scar'd the younger Gods
To hide themselves in forms of beast and bird.
Not far hence Atlas ; and beside him prone
Phorcus, the sire of Gorgons. Neighbour'd close

Oceanus, and Tethys, in whose lap
Sobb'd Clymene among her tangled hair.
In midst of all lay Themis, at the feet
Of Ops the queen all clouded round from sight ;
No shape distinguishable, more than when
Thick night confounds the pine-tops with the clouds : s
And many else whose names may not be told.
For when the Muse's wings are air-ward spread,
Who shall delay her flight ? And she must chaunt
Of Saturn, and his guide, who now had climb'd
With damp and slippery footing from a depth s
More horrid still. Above a sombre cliff
Their heads appear'd, and up their stature grew
Till on the level height their steps found ease :
Then Thea spread abroad her trembling arms
Upon the precincts of this nest of pain, s
And sidelong fix'd her eye on Saturn's face :
There saw she direst strife ; the supreme God
At war with all the frailty of grief,
Of rage, of fear, anxiety, revenge,
Remorse, spleen, hope, but most of all despair. s
Against these plagues he strove in vain ; for Fate
Had pour'd a mortal oil upon his head,
A disanointing poison : so that Thea,
Affrighted, kept her still, and let him pass
First onwards in, among the fallen tribe. 10

As with us mortal men, the laden heart
Is persecuted more, and fever'd more,
When it is nighing to the mournful house
Where other hearts are sick of the same bruise ;

So Saturn, as he walk'd into the midst, 105
Felt faint, and would have sunk among the rest,
But that he met Enceladus's eye,
Whose mightiness, and awe of him, at once
Came like an inspiration ; and he shouted,
"Titans, behold your God !" at which some
groan'd ; 110

Some started on their feet ; some also shouted ;
Some wept, some wail'd, all bow'd with reverence ;
And Ops, uplifting her black folded veil,
Show'd her pale cheeks, and all her forehead wan,
Her eye-brows thin and jet, and hollow eyes. 115

There is a roaring in the bleak-grown pines
When Winter lifts his voice ; there is a noise
Among immortals when a God gives sign,
With hushing finger, how he means to load
His tongue with the full weight of utterless thought, 120
With thunder, and with music, and with pomp :
Such noise is like the roar of bleak-grown pines ;
Which, when it ceases in this mountain'd world,
No other sound succeeds ; but ceasing here,
Among these fallen, Saturn's voice therefrom 125

Grew up like organ, that begins anew
Its strain, when other harmonies, stopt short,
Leave the dinn'd air vibrating silverly.
Thus grew it up—"Not in my own sad breast,
"Which is its own great judge and searcher out, 130
"Can I find reason why ye should be thus :
"Not in the legends of the first of days,
"Studied from that old spirit-leaved book
"Which starry Uranus with finger bright

- “ Sav’d from the shores of darkness, when the waves 135
“ Low-ebb’d still hid it up in shallow gloom ;—
“ And the which book ye know I ever kept
“ For my firm-based footstool :—Ah, infirm !
“ Not there, nor in sign, symbol, or portent
“ Of element, earth, water, air, and fire,— 140
“ At war, at peace, or inter-quarreling
“ One against one, or two, or three, or all
“ Each several one against the other three,
“ As fire with air loud warring when rain-floods
“ Drown both, and press them both against earth’s
 face, 145
“ Where, finding sulphur, a quadruple wrath
“ Unhinges the poor world ;—not in that strife,
“ Wherefrom I take strange lore, and read it deep,
“ Can I find reason why ye should be thus :
“ No, no-where can unriddle, though I search, 150
“ And pore on Nature’s universal scroll
“ Even to swooning, why ye, Divinities,
“ The first-born of all shap’d and palpable Gods,
“ Should cower beneath what, in comparison,
“ Is untremendous might. Yet ye are here, 155
“ O’erwhelm’d, and spurn’d, and batter’d, ye are here !
“ O Titans, shall I say, ‘ Arise ! ’—Ye groan :
“ Shall I say ‘ Crouch ! ’—Ye groan. What can I
 then ?
“ O Heaven wide ! O unseen parent dear !
“ What can I ? Tell me, all ye brethren Gods 160
“ How we can war, how engine our great wrath !
“ O speak your counsel now, for Saturn’s ear
“ Is all a-hunger’d. Thou, Oceanus,

“Ponderest high and deep ; and in thy face
“I see, astonished, that severe content 165
“Which comes of thought and musing : give us
help !”

So ended Saturn ; and the God of the Sea,
Sophist and sage, from no Athenian grove,
But cogitation in his watery shades,
Arose, with locks not oozy, and began, 170
In murmurs, which his first-endeavouring tongue
Caught infant-like from the far-foamed sands.
“O ye, whom wrath consumes ! who, passion-stung,
“Writhe at defeat, and nurse your agonies !
“Shut up your senses, stifle up your ears, 175
“My voice is not a bellows unto ire.
“Yet listen, ye who will, whilst I bring proof
“How ye, perforce, must be content to stoop :
“And in the proof much comfort will I give,
“If ye will take that comfort in its truth. 180
“We fall by course of Nature’s law, not force
“Of thunder, or of Jove. Great Saturn, thou
“Hast sifted well the atom-universe ;
“But for this reason, that thou art the King,
“And only blind from sheer supremacy, 185
“One avenue was shaded from thine eyes,
“Through which I wandered to eternal truth.
“And first, as thou wast not the first of powers,
“So art thou not the last ; it cannot be :
“Thou art not the beginning nor the end. 190
“From chaos and parental darkness came
“Light, the first fruits of that intestine broil,

“That sullen ferment, which for wondrous ends
“Was ripening in itself. The ripe hour came,
“And with it light, and light, engendering 195
“Upon its own producer, forthwith touch’d
“The whole enormous matter into life.
“Upon that very hour, our parentage,
“The Heavens and the Earth, were manifest :
“Then thou first-born, and we the giant-race, 200
“Found ourselves ruling new and beauteous realms.
“Now comes the pain of truth, to whom ’tis pain ;
“O folly ! for to bear all naked truths,
“And to envisage circumstance, all calm,
“That is the top of sovereignty. Mark well ! 205
“As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer far
“Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though once chiefs ;
“And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth
“In form and shape compact and beautiful,
“In will, in action free, companionship, 210
“And thousand other signs of purer life ;
“So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,
“A power more strong in beauty, born of us
“And fated to excel us, as we pass
“In glory that old Darkness : nor are we 215
“Thereby more conquer’d, than by us the rule
“Of shapeless Chaos. Say, doth the dull soil
“Quarrel with the proud forests it hath fed,
“And feedeth still, more comely than itself ?
“Can it deny the chieftdom of green groves ? 220
“Or shall the tree be envious of the dove
“Because it cooeth, and hath snowy wings
“To wander wherewithal and find its joys ?

“ We are such forest-trees, and our fair boughs
“ Have bred forth, not pale solitary doves, 225
“ But eagles golden-feather’d, who do tower
“ Above us in their beauty, and must reign
“ In right thereof ; for ’tis the eternal law
“ That first in beauty should be first in might :
“ Yea, by that law, another race may drive 230
“ Our conquerors to mourn as we do now.
“ Have ye beheld the young God of the Seas,
“ My disposessor ? Have ye seen his face ?
“ Have ye beheld his chariot, foam’d along
“ By noble winged creatures he hath made ? 235
“ I saw him on the calmed waters scud,
“ With such a glow of beauty in his eyes,
“ That it enforc’d me to bid sad farewell
“ To all my empire : farewell sad I took,
“ And hither came, to see how dolorous fate 240
“ Had wrought upon ye ; and how I might best
“ Give consolation in this woe extreme.
“ Receive the truth, and let it be your balm.”

Whether through poz’d conviction, or disdain,
They guarded silence, when Oceanus 245
Left murmuring, what deepest thought can tell ?
But so it was, none answer’d for a space,
Save one whom none regarded, Clymene ;
And yet she answer’d not, only complain’d,
With hectic lips, and eyes up-looking mild, 250
Thus wording timidly among the fierce :
“ O Father, I am here the simplest voice,
“ And all my knowledge is that joy is gone,

“ And this thing woe crept in among our hearts,
“ There to remain for ever, as I fear : 255
“ I would not bode of evil, if I thought
“ So weak a creature could turn off the help
“ Which by just right should come of mighty Gods ;
“ Yet let me tell my sorrow, let me tell
“ Of what I heard, and how it made me weep, 260
“ And know that we had parted from all hope.
“ I stood upon a shore, a pleasant shore,
“ Where a sweet clime was breathed from a land
“ Of fragrance, quietness, and trees, and flowers.
“ Full of calm joy it was, as I of grief ; 265
“ Too full of joy and soft delicious warmth ;
“ So that I felt a movement in my heart
“ To chide, and to reproach that solitude
“ With songs of misery, music of our woes ;
“ And sat me down, and took a mouthed shell 270
“ And murmur'd into it, and made melody—
“ O melody no more ! for while I sang,
“ And with poor skill let pass into the breeze
“ The dull shell's echo, from a bowery strand
“ Just opposite, an island of the sea, 275
“ There came enchantment with the shifting wind,
“ That did both drown and keep alive my ears.
“ I threw my shell away upon the sand,
“ And a wave fill'd it, as my sense was fill'd
“ With that new blissful golden melody. 280
“ A living death was in each gush of sounds,
“ Each family of rapturous hurried notes,
“ That fell, one after one, yet all at once,
“ Like pearl beads dropping sudden from their string :

“And then another, then another strain, 285
“Each like a dove leaving its olive perch,
“With music wing’d instead of silent plumes,
“To hover round my head, and make me sick
“Of joy and grief at once. Grief overcame,
“And I was stopping up my frantic ears, 290
“When, past all hindrance of my trembling hands,
“A voice came sweeter, sweeter than all tune,
“And still it cried, ‘Apollo ! young Apollo !
“‘The morning-bright Apollo ! young Apollo !’
“I fled, it follow’d me, and cried ‘Apollo !’ 295
“O Father, and O Brethren, had ye felt
“Those pains of mine ; O Saturn, hadst thou felt,
“Ye would not call this too indulged tongue
“Presumptuous, in thus venturing to be heard.”

So far her voice flow’d on, like timorous brook 300
That, lingering along a pebbled coast,
Doth fear to meet the sea : but sea it met,
And shudder’d ; for the overwhelming voice
Of huge Enceladus swallow’d it in wrath :
The ponderous syllables, like sullen waves 305
In the half-glutted hollows of reef-rocks,
Came booming thus, while still upon his arm
He lean’d ; not rising, from supreme contempt.
“Or shall we listen to the over-wise,
“Or to the over-foolish giant, Gods ? 310
“Not thunderbolt on thunderbolt, till all
“That rebel Jove’s whole armoury were spent,
“Not world on world upon these shoulders piled,
“Could agonise me more than baby-words

- “ In midst of this dethronement horrible. 315
“ Speak ! roar ! shout ! yell ! ye sleepy Titans all.
“ Do ye forget the blows, the buffets vile ?
“ Are ye not smitten by a youngling arm ?
“ Dost thou forget, sham Monarch of the Waves,
“ Thy scalding in the seas ? What, have I rous’d 320
“ Your spleens with so few simple words as these ?
“ O joy ! for now I see ye are not lost :
“ O joy ! for now I see a thousand eyes
“ Wide glaring for revenge ! ”—As this he said,
He lifted up his stature vast, and stood, 325
Still without intermission speaking thus :
“ Now ye are flames, I’ll tell you how to burn,
“ And purge the ether of our enemies ;
“ How to feed fierce the crooked stings of fire,
“ And singe away the swollen clouds of Jove, 330
“ Stifling that puny essence in its tent.
“ O let him feel the evil he hath done ;
“ For though I scorn Oceanus’s lore,
“ Much pain have I for more than loss of realms :
“ The days of peace and slumberous calm are fled ; 335
“ Those days, all innocent of scathing war,
“ When all the fair Existences of heaven
“ Came open-eyed to guess what we would speak :—
“ That was before our brows were taught to frown,
“ Before our lips knew else but solemn sounds ; 340
“ That was before we knew the winged thing,
“ Victory, might be lost, or might be won.
“ And be ye mindful that Hyperion,
“ Our brightest brother, still is undisgraced—
“ Hyperion, lo ! his radiance is here ! ” 345

All eyes were on Enceladus's face,
And they beheld, while still Hyperion's name
Flew from his lips up to the vaulted rocks,
A pallid gleam across his features stern :
Not savage, for he saw full many a God 350
Wroth as himself. He look'd upon them all,
And in each face he saw a gleam of light,
But splendor in Saturn's, whose hoar locks
Shone like the bubbling foam about a keel
When the prow sweeps into a midnight cove. 355
In pale and silver silence they remain'd,
Till suddenly a splendour, like the morn,
Pervaded all the beetling gloomy steeps,
All the sad spaces of oblivion,
And every gulf, and every chasm old, 360
And every height, and every sullen depth,
Voiceless, or hoarse with loud tormented streams :
And all the everlasting cataracts,
And all the headlong torrents far and near,
Mantled before in darkness and huge shade, 365
Now saw the light and made it terrible.
It was Hyperion :—a granite peak
His bright feet touch'd, and there he stay'd to view
The misery his brilliance had betray'd
To the most hateful seeing of itself. 370
Golden his hair of short Numidian curl,
Regal his shape majestic, a vast shade
In midst of his own brightness, like the bulk
Of Memnon's image at the set of sun
To one who travels from the dusking East : 375
Sighs, too, as mournful as that Memnon's harp

He utter'd, while his hands contemplative
He press'd together, and in silence stood.
Despondence seiz'd again the fallen Gods
At sight of the dejected King of Day, 330
And many hid their faces from the light :
But fierce Enceladus sent forth his eyes
Among the brotherhood ; and, at their glare,
Uprose Iäpetus, and Creüs too,
And Phorcus, sea-born, and together strode 335
To where he towered on his eminence.
There those four shouted forth old Saturn's name ;
Hyperion from the peak loud answered, " Saturn ! "
Saturn sat near the Mother of the Gods,
In whose face was no joy, though all the Gods 390
Gave from their hollow throats the name of " Saturn ! "

BOOK III.

THUS in alternate uproar and sad peace,
Amazed were those Titans utterly.
O leave them, Muse ! O leave them to their woes ;
For thou art weak to sing such tumults dire :
A solitary sorrow best befits 5
Thy lips, and antheming a lonely grief.
Leave them, O Muse ! for thou anon wilt find
Many a fallen old Divinity
Wandering in vain about bewildered shores.
Meantime touch piously the Delphic harp, 10
And not a wind of heaven but will breathe

In aid soft warble from the Dorian flute ;
For lo ! 'tis for the Father of all verse.
Flush every thing that hath a vermeil hue,
Let the rose glow intense and warm the air, 15
And let the clouds of even and of morn
Float in voluptuous fleeces o'er the hills ;
Let the red wine within the goblet boil,
Cold as a bubbling well ; let faint-lipp'd shells,
On sands, or in great deeps, vermilion turn 20
Through all their labyrinths ; and let the maid
Blush keenly, as with some warm kiss surpris'd.
Chief isle of the embowered Cyclades,
Rejoice, O Delos, with thine olives green
And poplars, and lawn-shading palms, and beech, 26
In which the Zephyr breathes the loudest song,
And hazels thick, dark-stemm'd beneath the shade :
Apollo is once more the golden theme !
Where was he, when the Giant of the Sun
Stood bright, amid the sorrow of his peers ? 30
Together had he left his mother fair
And his twin-sister sleeping in their bower,
And in the morning twilight wandered forth
Beside the osiers of a rivulet,
Full ankle-deep in lilies of the vale. 35
The nightingale had ceas'd, and a few stars
Were lingering in the heavens, while the thrush
Began calm-throated. Throughout all the isle
There was no covert, no retired cave
Unhaunted by the murmurous noise of waves, 40
Though scarcely heard in many a green recess.
He listen'd, and he wept, and his bright tears

Went trickling down the golden bow he held.
Thus with half-shut suffused eyes he stood,
While from beneath some cumbrous boughs hard by 45
With solemn step an awful Goddess came,
And there was purport in her looks for him,
Which he with eager guess began to read
Perplex'd, the while melodiously he said :
“How cam'st thou over the unfooted sea? 50
“Or hath that antique mien and robed form
“Mov'd in these vales invisible till now?
“Sure I have heard those vestments sweeping o'er
“The fallen leaves, when I have sat alone
“In cool mid-forest. Surely I have traced 55
“The rustle of those ample skirts about
“These grassy solitudes, and seen the flowers
“Lift up their heads, as still the whisper pass'd.
“Goddess! I have beheld those eyes before,
“And their eternal calm, and all that face, 60
“Or I have dream'd.”—“Yes,” said the supreme
 shape,
“Thou hast dream'd of me; and awaking up
“Didst find a lyre all golden by thy side,
“Whose strings touch'd by thy fingers, all the vast
“Unwearied ear of the whole universe 65
“Listen'd in pain and pleasure at the birth
“Of such new tuneful wonder. Is't not strange
“That thou shouldst weep, so gifted? Tell me, youth,
“What sorrow thou canst feel; for I am sad
“When thou dost shed a tear: explain thy griefs 70
“To one who in this lonely isle hath been
“The watcher of thy sleep and hours of life.

“From the young day when first thy infant hand
“Pluck’d witless the weak flowers, till thine arm
“Could bend that bow heroic to all times. 75
“Show thy heart’s secret to an ancient Power
“Who hath forsaken old and sacred thrones
“For prophecies of thee, and for the sake
“Of loveliness new born.”—Apollo then,
With sudden scrutiny and gloomless eyes, 80
Thus answer’d, while his white melodious throat
Throbb’d with the syllables.—“Mnemosyne !
“Thy name is on my tongue, I know not how ;
“Why should I tell thee what thou so well seest ?
“Why should I strive to show what from thy lips 85
“Would come no mystery ? For me, dark, dark,
“And painful vile oblivion seals my eyes :
“I strive to search wherefore I am so sad,
“Until a melancholy numbs my limbs ;
“And then upon the grass I sit, and moan, 90
“Like one who once had wings.—O why should I
“Feel curs’d and thwarted, when the liegeless air
“Yields to my step aspirant ? why should I
“Spurn the green turf as hateful to my feet ?
“Goddess benign, point forth some unknown thing : 95
“Are there not other regions than this isle ?
“What are the stars ? There is the sun, the sun !
“And the most patient brilliance of the moon !
“And stars by thousands ! Point me out the way
“To any one particular beauteous star, 100
“And I will flit into it with my lyre,
“And make its silvery splendour pant with bliss.
“I have heard the cloudy thunder : Where is power ?

"Whose hand, whose essence, what divinity
 "Makes this alarum in the elements, 105
 "While I here idle listen to the shores
 "In fearless yet in aching ignorance?
 "O tell me, lonely Goddess, by thy harp,
 "That waileth every morn and eventide,
 "Tell me why thus I rave, about these groves! 110
 "Mute thou remainest—Mute! yet I can read
 "A wondrous lesson in thy silent face:
 "Knowledge enormous makes a God of me.
 "Names, deeds, gray legends, dire events, rebellions,
 "Majesties, sovran voices, agonies, 115
 "Creations and destroyings, all at once
 "Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,
 "And deify me, as if some blithe wine
 "Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk,
 "And so become immortal."—Thus the God, 120
 While his enkindled eyes, with level glance
 Beneath his white soft temples, stedfast kept
 Trembling with light upon Mnemosyne.
 Soon wild commotions shook him, and made flush
 All the immortal fairness of his limbs;* 125
 Most like the struggle at the gate of death;
 Or liker still to one who should take leave
 Of pale immortal death, and with a pang
 As hot as death's is chill, with fierce convulse

* Here, in Woodhouse's transcript, are the following lines:—

Into a hue more roseate than sweet pain
 Gives to a ravish'd nymph, when her warm tears
 Gush luscious with no sob; or more severe.

Die into life : so young Apollo anguish'd : 130
 His very hair, his golden tresses famed
 Kept undulation round his eager neck.
 During the pain Mnemosyne upheld
 Her arms as one who prophesied.—At length
 Apollo shriek'd ;—and lo ! from all his limbs 135
 Celestial * * * * * * * *
 * * * * * * * *

HYPERION, A VISION.

FANATICS have their dreams, wherewith they weave
 A paradise for a sect ; the savage, too,
 From forth the loftiest fashion of his sleep
 Guesses at heaven ; pity these have not
 Traced upon vellum or wild Indian leaf 5
 The shadows of melodious utterance,
 But bare of laurel they live, dream, and die ;
 For Poesy alone can tell her dreams,—
 With the fine spell of words alone can save
 Imagination from the sable chain 10
 And dumb enchantment. Who alive can say,
 “Thou art not Poet—may'st not tell thy dreams ?”
 Since every man whose soul is not a clod

* In Woodhouse's transcript this line is filled up in pencil, thus :—

Celestial glory dawn'd : he was a god !

The word *brake* has been deleted and replaced by *dawn'd*.

Hath visions and would speak, if he had loved,
And been well nurtured in his mother tongue. 15
Whether the dream now purposed to rehearse
Be poet's or fanatic's will be known
When this warm scribe, my hand, is in the grave.

Methought I stood where trees of every clime,
Palm, myrtle, oak, and sycamore, and beech, 20
With plantane and spice-blossoms, made a screen.
In neighbourhood of fountains (by the noise
Soft-showering in mine ears), and (by the touch
Of scent) not far from roses. Twining round
I saw an arbour with a drooping roof 25
Of trellis vines, and bells, and larger blooms,
Like floral censers, swinging light in air ;
Before its wreathed doorway, on a mound
Of moss, was spread a feast of summer fruits,
Which, nearer seen, seem'd refuse of a meal 30
By angel tasted or our Mother Eve ;
For empty shells were scatter'd on the grass,
And grapestalks but half-bare, and remnants more
Sweet-smelling, whose pure kinds I could not know.
Still was more plenty than the fabled horn 35
Thrice emptied could pour forth at banqueting,
For Proserpine return'd to her own fields,
Where the white heifers low. And appetite,
More yearning than on earth I ever felt,
Growing within, I ate deliciously,— 40
And, after not long, thirsted ; for thereby
Stood a cool vessel of transparent juice
Sipp'd by the wander'd bee, the which I took,

And pledging all the mortals of the world,
And all the dead whose names are in our lips, 45
Drank. That full draught is parent of my theme.
No Asian poppy nor elixir fin
Of the soon-fading, jealous, Caliphat,
No poison gender'd in close monkish cell,
To thin the scarlet conclave of old men, 50
Could so have rapt unwilling life away.
Among the fragrant husks and berries crush'd
Upon the grass, I struggled hard against
The domineering potion, but in vain.
The cloudy swoon came on, and down I sank, 55
Like a Silenus on an antique vase.
How long I slumber'd 'tis a chance to guess.
When sense of life return'd, I started up
As if with wings, but the fair trees were gone,
The mossy mound and arbour were no more : 60
I look'd around upon the curved sides
Of an old sanctuary, with roof august,
Builded so high, it seem'd that filmed clouds
Might spread beneath as o'er the stars of heaven.
So old the place was, I remember'd none 65
The like upon the earth : what I had seen
Of grey cathedrals, buttress'd walls, rent towers,
The superannuations of sunk realms,
Or Nature's rocks toil'd hard in waves and winds,
Seem'd but the faulture of decrepit things 70
To that eternal domed monument.
Upon the marble at my feet there lay
Store of strange vessels and large draperies,
Which needs had been of dyed asbestos wove,

Or in that place the moth could not corrupt, 75
So white the linen, so, in some, distinct
Ran imageries from a sombre loom.
All in a mingled heap confused there lay
Robes, golden tongs, censer and chafing-dish,
Girdles, and chains, and holy jewelries. 80

Turning from these with awe, once more I raised
My eyes to fathom the space every way :
The embossed roof, the silent massy range
Of columns north and south, ending in mist
Of nothing ; then to eastward, where black gates 85
Were shut against the sunrise evermore ;
Then to the west I look'd, and saw far off
An image, huge of feature as a cloud,
At level of whose feet an altar slept,
To be approach'd on either side by steps 90
And marble balustrade, and patient travail
To count with toil the innumerable degrees.
Towards the altar sober-paced I went,
Repressing haste as too unholy there ;
And, coming nearer, saw beside the shrine 95
One ministering ; and there arose a flame
When in mid-day the sickening east-wind
Shifts sudden to the south, the small warm rain
Melts out the frozen incense from all flowers,
And fills the air with so much pleasant health 100
That even the dying man forgets his shroud ;—
Even so that lofty sacrificial fire,
Sending forth Maian incense, spread around
Forgetfulness of everything but bliss,

And clouded all the altar with soft smoke ; 105
From whose white fragrant curtains thus I heard
Language pronounced : “ If thou canst not ascend
These steps, die on that marble where thou art.
Thy flesh, near cousin to the common dust,
Will parch for lack of nutriment ; thy bones 110
Will wither in few years, and vanish so
That not the quickest eye could find a grain
Of what thou now art on that pavement cold.
The sands of thy short life are spent this hour,
And no hand in the universe can turn 115
Thy hourglass, if these gummed leaves be burnt
Ere thou canst mount up these immortal steps.”
I heard, I look’d : two senses both at once,
So fine, so subtle, felt the tyranny
Of that fierce threat and the hard task proposed. 120
Prodigious seem’d the toil ; the leaves were yet
Burning, when suddenly a palsied chill
Struck from the paved level up my limbs,
And was ascending quick to put cold grasp
Upon those streams that pulse beside the throat. 125
I shriek’d, and the sharp anguish of my shriek
Stung my own ears ; I strove hard to escape
The numbness, strove to gain the lowest step.
Slow, heavy, deadly was my pace : the cold
Grew stifling, suffocating at the heart ; 130
And when I clasp’d my hands I felt them not.
One minute before death my iced foot touch’d
The lowest stair ; and, as it touch’d, life seem’d
To pour in at the toes ; I mounted up
As once fair angels on a ladder flew 135

From the green turf to heaven. "Holy Power,"
Cried I, approaching near the horned shrine,
"What am I that should so be saved from death?
What am I that another death come not
To choke my utterance, sacrilegious, here?" 140
Then said the veiled shadow: "Thou hast felt
What 'tis to die and live again before
Thy fated hour; that thou hadst power to do so
Is thine own safety; thou hast dated on
Thy doom." "High Prophetess," said I, "purge
off, 145
Benign, if so it please thee, my mind's film."
"None can usurp this height," return'd that shade,
"But those to whom the miseries of the world
Are misery, and will not let them rest.
All else who find a haven in the world, 150
Where they may thoughtless sleep away their days,
If by a chance into this fane they come,
Rot on the pavement where thou rottedst half."
"Are there not thousands in the world," said I,
Encouraged by the sooth voice of the shade, 155
"Who love their fellows even to the death,
Who feel the giant agony of the world,
And more, like slaves to poor humanity,
Labour for mortal good? I sure should see
Other men here, but I am here alone." 160
"Those whom thou spakest of are no visionaries,"
Rejoin'd that voice; "they are no dreamers weak;
They seek no wonder but the human face,
No music but a happy-noted voice:
They come not here, they have no thought to come; 165

And thou art here, for thou art less than they.
What benefit canst thou do, or all thy tribe,
To the great world? Thou art a dreaming thing,
A fever of thyself: think of the earth;
What bliss, even in hope, is there for thee? 170
What haven? every creature hath its home,
Every sole man hath days of joy and pain,
Whether his labours be sublime or low—
The pain alone, the joy alone, distinct:
Only the dreamer venoms all his days, 175
Bearing more woe than all his sins deserve.
Therefore, that happiness be somewhat shared,
Such things as thou art are admitted oft
Into like gardens thou didst pass erewhile,
And suffer'd in these temples: for that cause 180
Thou standest safe beneath this statue's knees."
"That I am favour'd for unworthiness,
By such propitious parley medicined
In sickness not ignoble, I rejoice,
Aye, and could weep for love of such award." 185
So answer'd I, continuing, "If it please,
Majestic shadow, tell me where I am,
Whose altar this, for whom this incense curls;
What image this whose face I cannot see
For the broad marble knees; and who thou art, 190
Of accent feminine so courteous?"

Then the tall shade, in drooping linen veil'd,
Spoke out, so much more earnest, that her breath
Stirr'd the thin folds of gauze that drooping hung
About a golden censer from her hand 195

Pendent ; and by her voice I knew she shed
Long-treasured tears. " This temple, sad and lone,
Is all spared from the thunder of a war
Foughten long since by giant hierarchy
Against rebellion : this old image here, 200
Whose carved features wrinkled as he fell,
Is Saturn's ; I, Moneta, left supreme,
Sole goddess of this desolation."
I had no words to answer, for my tongue,
Useless, could find about its roofed home 205
No syllable of a fit majesty
To make rejoinder to Moneta's mourn :
There was a silence, while the altar's blaze
Was fainting for sweet food. I look'd thereon,
And on the paved floor, where nigh were piled 210
Faggots of cinnamon, and many heaps
Of other crisped spicewood : then again
I look'd upon the altar, and its horns
Whiten'd with ashes, and its languorous flame,
And then upon the offerings again ; 215
And so, by turns, till sad Moneta cried :
" The sacrifice is done, but not the less
Will I be kind to thee for thy good will.
My power, which to me is still a curse,
Shall be to thee a wonder ; for the scenes 220
Still swooning vivid through my globed brain,
With an electral changing misery,
Thou shalt with these dull mortal eyes behold
Free from all pain, if wonder pain thee not."
As near as an immortal's sphered words 225
Could to a mother's soften were these last :

And yet I had a terror of her robes,
And chiefly of the veils that from her brow
Hung pale, and curtain'd her in mysteries,
That made my heart too small to hold its blood. 230
This saw that Goddess, and with sacred hand
Parted the veils. Then saw I a wan face,
Not pined by human sorrows, but bright-blanch'd
By an immortal sickness which kills not ;
It works a constant change, which happy death 235
Can put no end to ; deathwards progressing
To no death was that visage ; it had past
The lily and the snow ; and beyond these
I must not think now, though I saw that face.
But for her eyes I should have fled away ; 240
They held me back with a benignant light,
Soft, mitigated by divinest lids
Half-closed, and visionless entire they seem'd
Of all external things ; they saw me not,
But in blank splendour beam'd, like the mild
moon, 245
Who comforts those she sees not, who knows not
What eyes are upward cast. As I had found
A grain of gold upon a mountain's side,
And, twing'd with avarice, strain'd out my eyes
To search its sullen entrails rich with ore, 250
So, at the view of sad Moneta's brow,
I ask'd to see what things the hollow brow
Behind environ'd : what high tragedy
In the dark secret chambers of her skull
Was acting, that could give so dread a stress 255
To her cold lips, and fill with such a light

Her planetary eyes, and touch her voice
With such a sorrow? "Shade of Memory!"
Cried I, with act adorant at her feet,
"By all the gloom hung round thy fallen house, 260
By this last temple, by the golden age,
By great Apollo, thy dear foster-child,
And by thyself, forlorn divinity,
The pale Omega of a wither'd race,
Let me behold, according as thou saidst, 265
What in thy brain so ferments to and fro!"
No sooner had this conjuration past
My devout lips, than side by side we stood
(Like a stunt bramble by a solemn pine)
Deep in the shady sadness of a vale 270
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
Far from the fiery noon and eve's one star.
Onward I look'd beneath the gloomy boughs,
And saw what first I thought an image huge,
Like to the image pedestal'd so high 275
In Saturn's temple; then Moneta's voice
Came brief upon mine ear. "So Saturn sat
When he had lost his realms;" whereon there grew
A power within me of enormous ken
To see as a god sees, and take the depth 280
Of things as nimbly as the outward eye
Can size and shape pervade. The lofty theme
Of those few words hung vast before my mind
With half-unravell'd web. I sat myself
Upon an eagle's watch, that I might see, 285
And seeing ne'er forget. No stir of life
Was in this shrouded vale,—not so much air

As in the zoning of a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass ;
But where the dead leaf fell there did it rest. 290
A stream went noiseless by, still deaden'd more
By reason of the fallen divinity
Spreading more shade ; the Naiad 'mid her reeds
Prest her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large foot-marks went 295
No further than to where old Saturn's feet
Had rested, and there slept how long a sleep !
Degraded, cold, upon the sodden ground
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,
Unsceptred, and his realmless eyes were closed ; 300
While his bow'd head seem'd listening to the Earth,
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seem'd no force could wake him from his place ;
But there came one who, with a kindred hand,
Touch'd his wide shoulders, after bending low 305
With reverence, though to one who knew it not.
Then came the grieved voice of Mnemosyne,
And grieved I hearken'd. " That divinity
Whom thou saw'st step from yon forlornest wood,
And with slow pace approach our fallen king, 310
Is Thea, softest-natured of our brood."
I mark'd the Goddess, in fair statuary
Surpassing wan Moneta by the head,
And in her sorrow nearer woman's tears.
There was a list'ning fear in her regard, 315
As if calamity had but begun ;

As if the venom'd clouds of evil days
Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear
Was with its stored thunder labouring up.
One hand she press'd upon that aching spot 320
Where beats the human heart, as if just there,
Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain ;
The other upon Saturn's bended neck
She laid, and to the level of his ear
Leaning, with parted lips some words she spoke 325
In solemn tenour and deep organ-tone ;
Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue
Would come in this like accenting ; how frail
To that large utterance of the early gods !

“ Saturn, look up ! and for what, poor lost king ! 330
I have no comfort for thee ; no, not one ;
I cannot say, wherefore thus sleepest thou ?
For Heaven is parted from thee, and the Earth
Knows thee not, so afflicted, for a god.
The Ocean, too, with all its solemn noise, 335
Has from thy sceptre pass'd ; and all the air
Is emptied of thy hoary majesty.
Thy thunder, captious at the new command,
Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house ;
And thy sharp lightning, in unpractised hands, 340
Scourges and burns our once serene domain.

“ With such remorseless speed still come new woes,
That unbelief has not a space to breathe.
Saturn ! sleep on : me thoughtless, why should I
Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude ? 345

Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes?
Saturn ! sleep on, while at thy feet I weep."

As when upon a tranced summer-night
Forests, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,
Dream, and so dream all night without a noise, 350
Save from one gradual solitary gust
Swelling upon the silence, dying off,
As if the ebbing air had but one wave,
So came these words and went ; the while in tears
She prest her fair large forehead to the earth, 355
Just where her fallen hair might spread in curls,
A soft and silken net for Saturn's feet.
Long, long these two were postured motionless,
Like sculpture builded-up upon the grave
Of their own power. A long awful time 360
I look'd upon them : still they were the same ;
The frozen God still bending to the earth,
And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet ;
Moneta silent. Without stay or prop
But my own weak mortality, I bore 365
The load of this eternal quietude,
The unchanging gloom and the three fixed shapes
Ponderous upon my senses, a whole moon ;
For by my burning brain I measured sure
Her silver seasons shedded on the night, 370
And every day by day methought I grew
More gaunt and ghostly. Oftentimes I pray'd
Intense, that death would take me from the vale
And all its burthens ; gasping with despair
Of change, hour after hour I cursed myself, 375

Until old Saturn raised his faded eyes,
And look'd around and saw his kingdom gone,
And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,
And that fair kneeling Goddess at his feet.

As the moist scent of flowers, and grass, and leaves,
Fills forest-dells with a pervading air, 381
Known to the woodland nostril, so the words
Of Saturn fill'd the mossy glooms around,
Even to the hollows of time-eaten oaks,
And to the windings of the foxes' hole, 385
With sad, low tones, while thus he spoke, and sent
Strange moanings to the solitary Pan.

“Moan, brethren, moan, for we are swallow'd up
And buried from all godlike exercise
Of influence benign on planets pale, 390
And peaceful sway upon man's harvesting,
And all those acts which Deity supreme
Doth ease its heart of love in. Moan and wail ;
Moan, brethren, moan ; for lo, the rebel spheres
Spin round ; the stars their ancient courses keep ; 395
Clouds still with shadowy moisture haunt the earth,
Still suck their fill of light from sun and moon ;
Still buds the tree, and still the seashores murmur ;
There is no death in all the universe,
No smell of death.—There shall be death. Moan,
moan ; 400

Moan, Cybele, moan ; for thy pernicious babes
Have chang'd a god into an aching palsy.
Moan, brethren, moan, for I have no strength left ;
Weak as the reed, weak, feeble as my voice

Oh! oh! the pain, the pain of feebleness ; 405
Moan, moan, for still I thaw ; or give me help ;
Throw down those imps, and give me victory.
Let me hear other groans, and trumpets blown
Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival,
From the gold peaks of heaven's high-piled clouds ; 410
Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir
Of strings in hollow shells ; and there shall be
Beautiful things made new, for the surprise
Of the sky-children." So he feebly ceased,
With such a poor and sickly-sounding pause, 415
Methought I heard some old man of the earth
Bewailing earthly loss ; nor could my eyes
And ears act with that unison of sense
Which marries sweet sound with the grace of form,
And dolorous accent from a tragic harp 420
With large-limb'd visions. More I scrutinized.
Still fixt he sat beneath the sable trees,
Whose arms spread straggling in wild serpent forms,
With leaves all hush'd ; his awful presence there
(Now all was silent) gave a deadly lie 425
To what I erewhile heard : only his lips
Trembled amid the white curls of his beard ;
They told the truth, though round the snowy locks
Hung nobly, as upon the face of heaven
A mid-day fleece of clouds. Thea arose, 430
And stretcht her white arm through the hollow dark,
Pointing some whither : whereat he too rose,
Like a vast giant, seen by men at sea
To grow pale from the waves at dull midnight.
They melted from my sight into the woods ; 435

Ere I could turn, Moneta cried, "These twain
 Are speeding to the families of grief,
 Where, rooft in by black rocks, they waste * in pain
 And darkness, for no hope." And she spake on,
 As ye may read who can unwearied pass 440
 Onward from the antechamber of this dream,
 Where, even at the open doors, awhile
 I must delay, and glean my memory
 Of her high phrase—perhaps no further dare.

END OF CANTO I.

CANTO II.

"MORTAL, that thou may'st understand aright,
 I humanize my sayings to thine ear,
 Making comparisons of earthly things ;
 Or thou might'st better listen to the wind,
 Whose language is to thee a barren noise, 5
 Though it blows legend-laden thro' the trees.
 In melancholy realms big tears are shed,
 More sorrow like to this, and such like woe,
 Too huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe.
 The Titans fierce, self-hid or prison-bound, 10
 Groan for the old allegiance once more,
 Listening in their doom for Saturn's voice.
 But one of the whole eagle-brood still keeps

* In addition to this word, Lord Houghton printed
 [wait?].

His sovereignty, and rule, and majesty :
Blazing Hyperion on his orb'd fire 15
Still sits, still snuffs the incense teeming up
From Man to the Sun's God—yet insecure.
For as upon the earth dire prodigies
Fright and perplex, so also shudders he ;
Not at dog's howl or gloom-bird's hated screech. 20
Or the familiar visiting of one
Upon the first toll of his passing bell,
Or prophesyings of the midnight lamp ;
But horrors, portioned to a giant nerve,
Make great Hyperion ache. His palace bright, 25
Bastion'd with pyramids of shining gold,
And touch'd with shade of bronzed obelisks,
Glares a blood-red thro' all the thousand courts,
Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries ;
And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds 30
Flash angrily ; when he would taste the wreaths
Of incense, breathed aloft from sacred hills,
Instead of sweets, his ample palate takes
Savour of poisonous brass and metals sick ;
Wherefore when harbour'd in the sleepy West, 35
After the full completion of fair day,
For rest divine upon exalted couch,
And slumber in the arms of melody,
He paces through the pleasant hours of ease,
With strides colossal, on from hall to hall, 40
While far within each aisle and deep recess
His winged minions in close clusters stand
Amazed, and full of fear ; like anxious men,
Who on a wide plain gather in sad troops,

When earthquakes jar their battlements and towers. 45
Even now where Saturn, roused from icy trance,
Goes step for step with Thea from yon woods,
Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,
Is sloping to the threshold of the West.
Thither we tend." Now in clear light I stood, 50
Relieved from the dusk vale. Mnemosyne
Was sitting on a square-edged polish'd stone,
That in its lucid depth reflected pure
Her priestess' garments. My quick eyes ran on
From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault, 55
Through bow'rs of fragrant and enwreathed light,
And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades.
Anon rush'd by the bright Hyperion ;
His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels,
And gave a roar as if of earthy fire, 60
That scar'd away the meek ethereal hours,
And made their dove-wings tremble. On he flared.

POSTHUMOUS
AND
FUGITIVE POEMS.

POSTHUMOUS AND FUGITIVE POEMS.

S O N N E T.

TO BYRON.

BYRON ! how sweetly sad thy melody !
Attuning still the soul to tenderness,
As if soft Pity, with unusual stress,
Had touch'd her plaintive lute, and thou, being by,
Hadst caught the tones, nor suffer'd them to die.
O'ershadowing sorrow doth not make thee less
Delightful : thou thy griefs dost dress
With a bright halo, shining beamily,
As when a cloud the golden moon doth veil,
Its sides are tinged with a resplendent glow,
Through the dark robe oft amber rays prevail,
And like fair veins in sable marble flow.
Still warble, dying swan ! still tell the tale,
The enchanting tale, the tale of pleasing woe.

SONNET.

TO CHATTERTON.

O CHATTERTON ! how very sad thy fate !
Dear child of sorrow—son of misery !
How soon the film of death obscured that eye,
Whence Genius mildly flash'd, and high debate.
How soon that voice, majestic and elate,
Melted in dying numbers ! Oh ! how nigh
Was night to thy fair morning. Thou didst die
A half-blown flow'ret which cold blasts amate.
But this is past : thou art among the stars
Of highest Heaven : to thy rolling spheres
Thou sweetly singest : nought thy hymning mars,
Above the ingrate world and human fears.
On earth the good man base detraction bars
From thy fair name, and waters it with tears.

SONNET.

TO SPENSER.

SPENSER ! a jealous honourer of thine,
A forester deep in thy midmost trees,
Did last eve ask my promise to refine
Some English that might strive thine ear to please,
But Elfin Poet 'tis impossible

For an inhabitant of wintry earth
To rise like Phœbus, with a golden quill,
Fire-wing'd and make a morning in his mirth.
It is impossible to escape from toil
O' the sudden and receive thy spiriting :
The flower must drink the nature of the soil
Before it can put forth its blossoming :
Be with me in the summer days and I
Will for thine honour and his pleasure try.

ODE TO APOLLO.

I.

In thy western halls of gold
When thou sittest in thy state,
Bards, that erst sublimely told
Heroic deeds, and sang of fate,
With fervour seize their adamantyne lyres,
Whose chords are solid rays, and twinkle radiant fires.

II.

Here Homer with his nervous arms
Strikes the twanging harp of war,
And even the western splendour warms,
While the trumpets sound afar :
But, what creates the most intense surprise,
His soul looks out through renovated eyes.

III.

Then, through thy Temple wide, melodious swells
The sweet majestic tone of Maro's lyre :
The soul delighted on each accent dwells,—
Enraptured dwells,—not daring to respire,
The while he tells of grief around a funeral pyre.

IV.

'Tis awful silence then again ;
Expectant stand the spheres ;
Breathless the laurell'd peers,
Nor move, till ends the lofty strain,
Nor move till Milton's tuneful thunders cease,
And leave once more the ravish'd heavens in peace.

V.

Thou biddest Shakspeare wave his hand,
And quickly forward spring
The Passions—a terrific band—
And each vibrates the string
That with its tyrant temper best accords,
While from their Master's lips pour forth the in-
spiring words.

VI.

A silver trumpet Spenser blows,
And, as its martial notes to silence flee,
From a virgin chorus flows
A hymn in praise of spotless Chastity.
'Tis still ! Wild warblings from the Æolian lyre
Enchantment softly breathe, and tremblingly expire.

VII.

Next thy Tasso's ardent numbers
Float along the pleased air,
Calling youth from idle slumbers,
Rousing them from Pleasure's lair :—
Then o'er the strings his fingers gently move,
And melt the soul to pity and to love.

VIII.

But when *Thou* joinest with the Nine,
And all the powers of song combine,
We listen here on earth :
The dying tones that fill the air,
And charm the ear of evening fair,
From thee, great God of Bards, receive their heavenly
birth.

HYMN TO APOLLO.

I.

GOD of the golden bow,
And of the golden lyre,
And of the golden hair,
And of the golden fire,
Charioteer
Of the patient year,
Where—where slept thine ire,

When like a blank idiot I put on thy wreath,
Thy laurel, thy glory,
The light of thy story,
Or was I a worm—too low crawling, for death?
O Delphic Apollo !

II.

The Thunderer grasp'd and grasp'd,
The Thunderer frown'd and frown'd ;
The eagle's feathery mane
For wrath became stiffen'd—the sound
Of breeding thunder
Went drowsily under,
Muttering to be unbound.
O why didst thou pity, and beg for a worm,
Why touch thy soft lute
Till the thunder was mute,
Why was not I crush'd—such a pitiful germ?
O Delphic Apollo !

III.

The Pleiades were up,
Watching the silent air ;
The seeds and roots in the Earth
Were swelling for summer fare ;
The Ocean, its neighbour,
Was at its old labour,
When, who—who did dare

To tie for a moment thy plant round his brow,
And grin and look proudly,
And blaspheme so loudly,
And live for that honour, to stoop to thee now?
O Delphic Apollo !

SONNET.

As from the darkening gloom a silver dove
Upsoars, and darts into the eastern light,
On pinions that nought moves but pure delight,
So fled thy soul into the realms above,
Regions of peace and everlasting love ;
Where happy spirits, crown'd with circlets bright
Of starry beam, and gloriously bedight,
Taste the high joy none but the blest can prove.
There thou or joinest the immortal quire
In melodies that even heaven fair
Fill with superior bliss, or, at desire,
O' the omnipotent Father cleav'st the air
On holy message sent—What pleasure's higher?
Wherefore does any grief our joy impair?

SONNET.

OH ! how I love, on a fair summer's eve,
When streams of light pour down the golden west,
And on the balmy zephyrs tranquil rest
The silver clouds, far—far away to leave

All meaner thoughts, and take a sweet reprieve
From little cares ; to find, with easy quest,
A fragrant wild, with Nature's beauty drest,
And there into delight my soul deceive.
There warm my breast with patriotic lore,
Musing on Milton's fate—on Sydney's bier—
Till their stern forms before my mind arise :
Perhaps on wing of Poesy upsoar,
Full often dropping a delicious tear,
When some melodious sorrow spells mine eyes.

SONNET.

TO A YOUNG LADY WHO SENT ME A
LAUREL CROWN.

FRESH morning gusts have blown away all fear
From my glad bosom,—now from gloominess
I mount for ever—not an atom less
Than the proud laurel shall content my bier.
No ! by the eternal stars ! or why sit here
In the Sun's eye, and 'gainst my temples press
Apollo's very leaves, woven to bless
By thy white fingers and thy spirit clear.
Lo ! who dares say, "Do this ?" Who dares call down
My will from its high purpose ? Who say, "Stand,"
Or "Go ?" This mighty moment I would frown
On abject Cæsars—not the stoutest band
Of mailed heroes could tear off my crown :
Yet would I kneel and kiss thy gentle hand !

SONNET.

WRITTEN ON A SUMMER EVENING.

THE church bells toll'd a melancholy round,
Calling the people to some other prayers,
Some other gloominess, more dreadful cares,
More hearkening to the sermon's horrid sound.
Surely the mind of man is closely bound
To some blind spell ; seeing that each one tears
Himself from fireside joys, and Lydian airs,
Fond converse high of those with glory crown'd.
Still, still they toll, and I should feel a damp,—
A chill as from a tomb, did I not know
That they are dying like an outburnt lamp ;
That 'tis their sighing, wailing as they go
Into oblivion ;—that fresh flowers will grow,
And many glories of immortal stamp.

SONNET.

AFTER dark vapours have oppress'd our plains
For a long dreary season, comes a day
Born of the gentle South, and clears away
From the sick heavens all unseemly stains.
The anxious month, relieved of its pains,
Takes as a long-lost right the feel of May ;
The eyelids with the passing coolness play
Like rose leaves with the drip of Summer rains.

And calmest thoughts come round us ; as of leaves
 Budding—fruit ripening in stillness—Autumn
 suns
Smiling at eve upon the quiet sheaves—
Sweet Sappho's cheek—a smiling infant's breath—
 The gradual sand that through an hour-glass
 runs—
A woodland rivulet—a Poet's death.

SONNET.

WRITTEN ON THE BLANK SPACE OF A LEAF AT
THE END OF CHAUCER'S TALE OF "THE
FLOURE AND THE LEFE."

THIS pleasant tale is like a little copse :
 The honied lines so freshly interlace
 To keep the reader in so sweet a place,
So that he here and there full-hearted stops ;
And oftentimes he feels the dewy drops
 Come cool and suddenly against his face,
 And by the wandering melody may trace
Which way the tender-legged linnet hops.
Oh ! what a power has white Simplicity !
 What mighty power has this gentle story !
 I that do ever feel a thirst for glory,
Could at this moment be content to lie
 Meekly upon the grass, as those whose sobbings
 Were heard of none beside the mournful robins.

TWO SONNETS.

I.

TO HAYDON, WITH A SONNET WRITTEN ON
SEEING THE ELGIN MARBLES.

HAYDON ! forgive me that I cannot speak
Definitively on these mighty things ;
Forgive me that I have not eagle's wings—
That what I want I know not where to seek :
And think that I would not be over meek
In rolling out upfollow'd thunderings,
Even to the steep of Heliconian springs
Were I of ample strength for such a freak—
Think too, that all those numbers should be thine ;
Whose else ? In this who touch thy vesture's hem ?
For when men star'd at what was most divine
With browless idiotism and o'erwise phlegm,
Thou hadst beheld the Hesperean shine
Of their star in the East, and gone to worship them.

II.

ON SEEING THE ELGIN MARBLES FOR THE
FIRST TIME.

My spirit is too weak—mortality
Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep,
And each imagined pinnacle and steep
Of godlike hardship, tells me I must die
Like a sick eagle looking at the sky.

Yet 'tis a gentle luxury to weep
That I have not the cloudy winds to keep,
Fresh for the opening of the morning's eye.
Such dim-conceived glories of the brain
Bring round the heart an indescribable feud ;
So do these wonders a most dizzy pain,
That mingles Grecian grandeur with the rude
Wasting of old Time—with a billowy main—
A sun—a shadow of a magnitude.

SONNET.

ON A PICTURE OF LEANDER.

COME hither all sweet maidens soberly,
Down-looking aye, and with a chasten'd light,
Hid in the fringes of your eyelids white,
And meekly let your fair hands joined be,
As if so gentle that ye could not see,
Untouch'd, a victim of your beauty bright,
Sinking away to his young spirit's night,—
Sinking bewilder'd 'mid the dreary sea :
'Tis young Leander toiling to his death ;
Nigh swooning, he doth purse his weary lips
For Hero's cheek, and smiles against her
smile.
O horrid dream ! see how his body dips
Dead-heavy ; arms and shoulders gleam awhile :
He's gone ; up bubbles all his amorous breath !

ON * * * * *

I.

THINK not of it, sweet one, so ;—
Give it not a tear ;
Sigh thou mayst, and bid it go
Any, any where.

II.

Do not look so sad, sweet one,—
Sad and fadingly ;
Shed one drop then—it is gone—
O 'twas born to die.

III.

Still so pale ? then dearest weep ;
Weep, I'll count the tears,
And each one shall be a bliss
For thee in after years.

IV.

Brighter has it left thine eyes
Than a sunny rill ;
And thy whispering melodies
Are tenderer still.

V.

Yet—as all things mourn awhile
At fleeting blisses ;
Let us too ; but be our dirge
A dirge of kisses.

LINES.

I.

UNFELT, unheard, unseen,
I've left my little queen,
Her languid arms in silver slumber lying :
Ah ! through their nestling touch,
Who—who could tell how much
There is for madness—cruel, or complying?

II.

Those faery lids how sleek !
Those lips how moist !—they speak,
In ripest quiet, shadows of sweet sounds :
Into my fancy's ear
Melting a burden dear,
How “ Love doth know no fullness, nor no bounds.”

III.

True !—tender monitors !
I bend unto your laws :
This sweetest day for dalliance was born !
So, without more ado,
I'll feel my heaven anew,
For all the blushing of the hasty morn.

SONNET.

ON THE SEA.

IT keeps eternal whisperings around
Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell
Gluts twice ten thousand caverns, till the spell
Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound.
Often 'tis in such gentle temper found,
That scarcely will the very smallest shell
Be moved for days from whence it sometime fell,
When last the winds of heaven were unbound.
Oh ye ! who have your eye-balls vex'd and tired,
Feast them upon the wideness of the Sea ;
Oh ye ! whose ears are dinn'd with uproar
rude,
Or fed too much with cloying melody,—
Sit ye near some old cavern's mouth, and brood
Until ye start, as if the sea-nymphs quired !

SONNET.

ON LEIGH HUNT'S POEM, "THE STORY OF RIMINI."

WHO loves to peer up at the morning sun,
With half-shut eyes and comfortable cheek,
Let him, with this sweet tale, full often seek
For meadows where the little rivers run ;

Who loves to linger with that brightest one
 Of Heaven—Hesperus—let him lowly speak
 These numbers to the night, and starlight meek,
 Or moon, if that her hunting be begun.
 He who knows these delights, and too is prone
 To moralise upon a smile or tear,
 Will find at once a region of his own,
 A bower for his spirit, and will steer
 To alleys where the fir-tree drops its cone,
 Where robins hop, and fallen leaves are sear.

FRAGMENT.

WHERE'S the Poet? show him ! show him,
 Muses nine ! that I may know him !
 'Tis the man who with a man
 Is an equal, be he King,
 Or poorest of the beggar-clan, 5
 Or any other wondrous thing
 A man may be 'twixt ape and Plato ;
 'Tis the man who with a bird,
 Wren, or Eagle, finds his way to
 All its instincts ; he hath heard 10
 The Lion's roaring, and can tell
 What his horny throat expresseth,
 And to him the Tiger's yell
 Comes articulate and presseth
 On his ear like mother-tongue. 15

FRAGMENT :

MODERN LOVE.

AND what is Love? It is a doll dress'd up
 For idleness to cosset, nurse, and dandle ;
 A thing of soft misnomers, so divine
 That silly youth doth think to make itself
 Divine by loving, and so goes on 5
 Yawning and doting a whole summer long,
 Till Miss's comb is made a pearl tiara,
 And common Wellingtons turn Romeo boots ;
 Then Cleopatra lives at number seven,
 And Antony resides in Brunswick Square. 10
 Fools ! if some passions high have warm'd the world,
 If Queens and Soldiers have played deep for hearts,
 It is no reason why such agonies
 Should be more common than the growth of weeds.
 Fools ! make me whole again that weighty pearl 15
 The Queen of Egypt melted, and I'll say
 That ye may love in spite of beaver hats.

FRAGMENT OF "THE CASTLE BUILDER."

* * * * *
 TO-NIGHT I'll have my friar—let me think
 About my room,—I'll have it in the pink ;
 It should be rich and sombre, and the moon,
 Just in its mid-life in the midst of June,
 Should look thro' four large windows and display 5
 Clear, but for gold-fish vases in the way,

Their glassy diamonding on Turkish floor ;
The tapers keep aside, an hour and more,
To see what else the moon alone can show ;
While the night-breeze doth softly let us know 10
My terrace is well bower'd with oranges.
Upon the floor the dullest spirit sees
A guitar-ribband and a lady's glove
Beside a crumple-leaved tale of love ;
A tambour-frame, with Venus sleeping there, 15
All finish'd but some ringlets of her hair ;
A viol, bow-strings torn, cross-wise upon
A glorious folio of Anacreon ;
A skull upon a mat of roses lying,
Ink'd purple with a song concerning dying ; 20
An hour-glass on the turn, amid the trails
Of passion-flower ;—just in time there sails
A cloud across the moon,—the lights bring in !
And see what more my phantasy can win.
It is a gorgeous room, but somewhat sad ; 25
The draperies are so, as tho' they had
Been made for Cleopatra's winding-sheet ;
And opposite the steadfast eye doth meet
A spacious looking-glass, upon whose face,
In letters raven-sombre, you may trace 30
Old "Mene, Mene, Tekel Upharsin."
Greek busts and statuary have ever been
Held, by the finest spirits, fitter far
Than vase grotesque and Siamesian jar ;
Therefore 'tis sure a want of Attic taste 35
That I should rather love a Gothic waste
Of eyesight on cinque-coloured potter's clay,

Than on the marble fairness of old Greece.
 My table-coverlits of Jason's fleece
 And black Numidian sheep-wool should be wrought, 40
 Gold, black, and heavy, from the Lama brought.
 My ebon sofas should delicious be
 With down from Leda's cygnet progeny.
 My pictures all Salvator's, save a few
 Of Titian's portraiture, and one, though new, 45
 Of Haydon's in its fresh magnificence.
 My wine—O good ! 'tis here at my desire,
 And I must sit to supper with my friar.

* * * * *

FRAGMENT.

"Under the flag
 Of each his faction, they to battle bring
 Their embryo atoms."—MILTON.

WELCOME joy, and welcome sorrow,
 Lethe's weed and Hermes' feather ;
 Come to-day, and come to-morrow,
 I do love you both together !
 I love to mark sad faces in fair weather ; 5
 And hear a merry laugh amid the thunder ;
 Fair and foul I love together :
 Meadows sweet where flames are under,
 And a giggle at a wonder ;
 Visage sage at pantomime ; 10
 Funeral, and steeple-chime ;

Infant playing with a skull ;
 Morning fair, and shipwreck'd hull ;
 Nightshade with the woodbine kissing ;
 Serpents in red roses hissing ; 15
 Cleopatra regal-dress'd
 With the aspic at her breast ;
 Dancing music, music sad,
 Both together, sane and mad ;
 Muses bright and muses pale ; 20
 Sombre Saturn, Momus hale ;—
 Laugh and sigh, and laugh again ;
 Oh the sweetness of the pain !
 Muses bright, and muses pale,
 Bare your faces of the veil ; 25
 Let me see ; and let me write
 Of the day, and of the night—
 Both together :—let me slake
 All my thirst for sweet heart-ache !
 Let my bower be of yew, 30
 Interwreath'd with myrtles new ;
 Pines and lime-trees full in bloom,
 And my couch a low grass-tomb.

SONNET.

WHEN I have fears that I may cease to be
 Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,
 Before high piled books, in charactery,
 Hold like rich garners the full ripen'd grain ;

When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance ;
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,
That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never have relish in the faery power
Of unreflecting love ;—then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

SONNET.

TO HOMER.

STANDING aloof in giant ignorance,
Of thee I hear and of the Cyclades,
As one who sits ashore and longs perchance
To visit dolphin-coral in deep seas.
So thou wast blind ;—but then the veil was rent,
For Jove uncurtain'd Heaven to let thee live,
And Neptune made for thee a spermy tent,
And Pan made sing for thee his forest-hive ;
Aye on the shores of darkness there is light,
And precipices show untrodden green,
There is a budding morrow in midnight,
There is a triple sight in blindness keen ;
Such seeing hadst thou, as it once befel
To Dian, Queen of Earth, and Heaven, and Hell.

A DRAUGHT OF SUNSHINE.

HENCE Burgundy, Claret, and Port,
Away with old Hock and Madeira,
Too earthly ye are for my sport ;
There's a beverage brighter and clearer.
Instead of a pitiful rummer, 5
My wine overbrims a whole summer ;
My bowl is the sky,
And I drink at my eye,
Till I feel in the brain
A Delphian pain— 10
Then follow, my Caius ! then follow :
On the green of the hill
We will drink our fill
Of golden sunshine,
Till our brains intertwine 15
With the glory and grace of Apollo !
God of the Meridian,
And of the East and West,
To thee my soul is flown,
And my body is earthward press'd.— 20
It is an awful mission,
A terrible division ;
And leaves a gulf austere
To be fill'd with worldly fear.
Aye, when the soul is fled 25
To high above our head,
Affrighted do we gaze
After its airy maze,

As doth a mother wild,
 When her young infant child 30
 Is in an eagle's claws—
 And is not this the cause
 Of madness?—God of Song,
 Thou bearest me along
 Through sights I scarce can bear : 35
 O let me, let me share
 With the hot lyre and thee,
 The staid Philosophy.
 Temper my lonely hours,
 And let me see thy bowers 40
 More unalarm'd !

FAERY SONGS.

I.

SHED no tear—oh shed no tear !
 The flower will bloom another year.
 Weep no more—oh weep no more !
 Young buds sleep in the root's white core.
 Dry your eyes—oh dry your eyes, 5
 For I was taught in Paradise
 To ease my breast of melodies—
 Shed no tear.

Overhead—look overhead
 'Mong the blossoms white and red— 10
 Look up, look up—I flutter now
 On this flush pomegranate bough.

See me—'tis this silvery bill
Ever cures the good man's ill.
Shed no tear—oh shed no tear ! 15
The flower will bloom another year.
Adieu, Adieu ! I fly, adieu !
I vanish in the heaven's blue—
Adieu ! Adieu !

II.

AH ! woe is me ! poor Silver-wing !
That I must chant thy lady's dirge,
And death to this fair haunt of spring,
Of melody, and streams of flowery verge,—
Poor Silver-wing ! ah ! woe is me ! 5
That I must see
These blossoms snow upon thy lady's pall !
Go, pretty page ! and in her ear
Whisper that the hour is near.
Softly tell her not to fear 10
Such calm favonian burial !
Go, pretty page ! and soothly tell,—
The blossoms hang by a melting spell,
And fall they must, ere a star wink thrice
Upon her closed eyes, 15
That now in vain are weeping their last tears,
At sweet life leaving, and these arbours green,—
Rich dowry from the Spirit of the Spheres,—
Alas ! poor Queen !

SONG.

WRITTEN ON A BLANK PAGE IN BEAUMONT AND
FLETCHER'S WORKS, BETWEEN "CUPID'S RE-
VENGE" AND "THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN."

I.

SPIRIT here that reignest !
Spirit here that painest !
Spirit here that burnest !
Spirit here that mournest !
 Spirit, I bow
 My forehead low,
 Enshaded with thy pinions.
 Spirit, I look
 All passion-struck
 Into thy pale dominions.

II.

Spirit here that laughest !
Spirit here that quaffest !
Spirit here that dancest !
Noble soul that prancest !
 Spirit, with thee
 I join in the glee
 While nudging the elbow of Momus !
 Spirit ! I flush
 With a Bacchanal blush,
 Just fresh from the Banquet of Comus.

STANZAS.

I.

IN a drear-nighted December,
 Too happy, happy tree,
 Thy branches ne'er remember
 Their green felicity :
 The north cannot undo them,
 With a sleety whistle through them ;
 Nor frozen thawings glue them
 From budding at the prime.

II.

In a drear-nighted December,
 Too happy, happy brook,
 Thy bubblings ne'er remember
 Apollo's summer look ;
 But with a sweet forgetting,
 They stay their crystal fretting,
 Never, never petting
 About the frozen time.

III.

Ah ! would 'twere so with many
 A gentle girl and boy !
 But were there ever any
 Writhed not at passed joy ?
 To know the change and feel it,
 When there is none to heal it,
 Nor numbed sense to steal it,
 Was never said in rhyme.

SONNET.

THE HUMAN SEASONS.

FOUR Seasons fill the measure of the year ;
 There are four seasons in the mind of man :
 He has his lusty Spring, when fancy clear
 Takes in all beauty with an easy span :
 He has his Summer, when luxuriously
 Spring's honied cud of youthful thought he loves
 To ruminate, and by such dreaming nigh
 His nearest unto heaven : quiet coves
 His soul has in its Autumn, when his wings
 He furleth close ; contented so to look
 On mists in idleness—to let fair things
 Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook.
 He has his Winter too of pale misfeature,
 Or else he would forego his mortal nature.

 LINES ON SEEING A LOCK OF MILTON'S
 HAIR.

CHIEF of organic numbers !
 Old Scholar of the Spheres !
 Thy spirit never slumbers,
 But rolls about our ears,
 For ever, and for ever ! 5
 O what a mad endeavour
 Worketh he,
 Who to thy sacred and ennobled hearse
 Would offer a burnt sacrifice of verse
 And melody. 10

How heavenward thou soundest,
Live Temple of sweet noise,
And Discord unconfoundest,
Giving Delight new joys,
And Pleasure nobler pinions ! 15
O, where are thy dominions ?

Lend thine ear
To a young Delian oath,—ay, by thy soul,
By all that from thy mortal lips did roll,
And by the kernel of thine earthly love, 20
Beauty in things on earth and things above,
I swear !

When every childish fashion
Has vanished from my rhyme,
Will I, grey-gone in passion, 25
Leave to an after-time,
Hymning and harmony
Of thee, and of thy works, and of thy life ;
But vain is now the burning and the strife,
Pangs are in vain, until I grow high-rife 30
With old Philosophy,
And mad with glimpses of futurity !

For many years my offering must be hush'd ;
When I do speak, I'll think upon this
hour,
Because I feel my forehead hot and flushed, 35
Even at the simplest vassal of thy power,—
A lock of thy bright hair,—
Sudden it came,

And I was startled, when I caught thy name
Coupled so unaware ; 40
Yet, at the moment, temperate was my blood,
I thought I had beheld it from the flood!

SONNET.

ON SITTING DOWN TO READ KING LEAR ONCE
AGAIN.

O GOLDEN tongued Romance, with serene lute !
Fair plumed Syren, Queen of far-away !
Leave melodizing on this wintry day,
Shut up thine olden pages, and be mute.
Adieu ! for, once again, the fierce dispute
Betwixt damnation and impassion'd clay
Must I burn through ; once more humbly assay
The bitter-sweet of this Shakespearian fruit :
Chief Poet ! and ye clouds of Albion,
Begetters of our deep eternal theme !
When through the old oak Forest I am gone,
Let me not wander in a barren dream,
But, when I am consumed in the fire,
Give me new Phoenix wings to fly at my desire.

SONNET.

TO THE NILE.

SON of the old moon-mountains African !
Chief of the Pyramid and Crocodile !
We call thee fruitful, and, that very while,
A desert fills our seeing's inward span ;

Nurse of swart nations since the world began,
Art thou so fruitful? or dost thou beguile
Such men to honour thee, who, worn with
toil,
Rest for a space 'twixt Cairo and Decan?
O may dark fancies err! they surely do;
'Tis ignorance that makes a barren waste
Of all beyond itself, thou dost bedew
Green rushes like our rivers, and dost taste
The pleasant sun-rise, green isles hast thou too,
And to the sea as happily dost haste.

LINES FROM A LETTER TO JOHN
HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

O THOU whose face hath felt the Winter's wind,
Whose eye has seen the snow-clouds hung in
mist,
And the black elm tops 'mong the freezing stars,
To thee the spring will be a harvest-time.
O thou, whose only book has been the light
Of supreme darkness which thou feddest on
Night after night when Phœbus was away,
To thee the Spring shall be a triple morn.
O fret not after knowledge—I have none,
And yet my song comes native with the warmth.
O fret not after knowledge—I have none,
And yet the Evening listens. He who saddens
At thought of idleness cannot be idle,
And he's awake who thinks himself asleep.

SONNET.

WRITTEN IN ANSWER TO A SONNET ENDING
THUS :—

Dark eyes are dearer far
Than those that mock the hyacinthine bell—
By J. H. REYNOLDS.

BLUE ! 'Tis the life of heaven,—the domain
Of Cynthia,—the wide palace of the sun,—
The tent of Hesperus, and all his train,—
The bosomer of clouds, gold, grey and dun.
Blue ! 'Tis the life of waters :—Ocean
And all its vassal streams, pools numberless,
May rage, and foam, and fret, but never can
Subside, if not to dark blue nativeness.
Blue ! Gentle cousin of the forest-green,
Married to green in all the sweetest flowers,—
Forget-me-not,—the Blue bell,—and, that Queen
Of secrecy, the Violet : what strange powers
Hast thou, as a mere shadow ! But how great,
When in an Eye thou art, alive with fate !

SONNET.

TO JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

O THAT a week could be an age, and we
Felt parting and warm meeting every week,
Then one poor year a thousand years would be,
The flush of welcome ever on the cheek :

So could we live long life in little space,
So time itself would be annihilate,
So a day's journey in oblivious haze
To serve our joys would lengthen and dilate.
O to arrive each Monday morn from Ind !
To land each Tuesday from the rich Levant !
In little time a host of joys to bind,
And keep our souls in one eternal pant !
This morn, my friend, and yester-evening taught
Me how to harbour such a happy thought.

TEIGNMOUTH :

“SOME DOGGEREL,” SENT IN A LETTER TO
B. R. HAYDON.

I.

HERE all the summer could I stay,
For there's Bishop's teign
And King's teign
And Coomb at the clear teign head—
Where close by the stream
You may have your cream
All spread upon barley bread.

II.

There's arch Brook
And there's larch Brook
Both turning many a mill ;
And cooling the drouth
Of the salmon's mouth,
And fattening his silver gill.

III.

There is Wild wood,
A Mild hood
To the sheep on the lea o' the down,
Where the golden furze,
With its green, thin spurs,
Doth catch at the maiden's gown.

IV.

There is Newton marsh
With its spear grass harsh—
A pleasant summer level
Where the maidens sweet
Of the Market Street,
Do meet in the dusk to revel.

V.

There's the Barton rich
With dyke and ditch
And hedge for the thrush to live in,
And the hollow tree
For the buzzing bee
And a bank for the wasp to hive in.

VI.

And O, and O
The daisies blow
And the primroses are waken'd,
And the violets white
Sit in silver plight,
And the green bud's as long as the spike end.

VII.

Then who would go
Into dark Soho,
And chatter with dack'd hair'd critics,
When he can stay
For the new-mown hay,
And startle the dappled Prickets?

THE DEVON MAID:

STANZAS SENT IN A LETTER TO B. R. HAYDON.

I.

WHERE be ye going, you Devon Maid?
And what have ye there in the Basket?
Ye tight little fairy just fresh from the dairy,
Will ye give me some cream if I ask it?

II.

I love your Meads, and I love your flowers,
And I love your junkets mainly,
But 'hind the door I love kissing more,
O look not so disdainly.

III.

I love your hills, and I love your dales,
And I love your flocks a-bleating—
But O, on the heather to lie together,
With both our hearts a-beating!

IV.

I'll put your Basket all safe in a nook,
 Your shawl I hang up on the willow,
 And we will sigh in the daisy's eye
 And kiss on a grass green pillow.

EPISTLE.

TO JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

DEAR Reynolds ! as last night I lay in bed,
 There came before my eyes that wonted thread
 Of shapes, and shadows, and remembrances,
 That every other minute vex and please :
 Things all disjointed come from north and south,— 5
 Two Witch's eyes above a Cherub's mouth,
 Voltaire with casque and shield and habergeon,
 And Alexander with his nightcap on ;
 Old Socrates a-tying his cravat,
 And Hazlitt playing with Miss Edgeworth's cat : 10
 And Junius Brutus, pretty well so so,
 Making the best of's way towards Soho.

Few are there who escape these visitings,—
 Perhaps one or two whose lives have patent wings,
 And thro' whose curtains peeps no hellish nose, 15
 No wild-boar tushes, and no Mermaid's toes ;
 But flowers bursting out with lusty pride,
 And young Æolian harps personify'd ;

Some Titian colours touch'd into real life,—
The sacrifice goes on ; the pontiff knife 20
Gleams in the Sun, the milk-white heifer lows,
The pipes go shrilly, the libation flows :
A white sail shows above the green-head cliff,
Moves round the point, and throws her anchor
stiff ;
The mariners join hymn with those on land. 25

You know the Enchanted Castle,—it doth stand
Upon a rock, on the border of a Lake,
Nested in trees, which all do seem to shake
From some old magic-like Urganda's Sword.
O Phœbus ! that I had thy sacred word 30
To show this Castle, in fair dreaming wise,
Unto my friend, while sick and ill he lies !

You know it well enough, where it doth seem
A mossy place, a Merlin's Hall, a dream ;
You know the clear Lake, and the little Isles, 35
The mountains blue, and cold near neighbour
rills,
All which elsewhere are but half animate ;
There do they look alive to love and hate,
To smiles and frowns ; they seem a lifted mound
Above some giant, pulsing underground. 40

Part of the Building was a chosen See,
Built by a banish'd Santon of Chaldee ;
The other part, two thousand years from him,
Was built by Cuthbert de Saint Aldebrim ;

Then there's a little wing, far from the Sun, 45
Built by a Lapland Witch turn'd maudlin Nun ;
And many other juts of aged stone
Founded with many a mason-devil's groan.

The doors all look as if they op'd themselves,
The windows as if latch'd by Fays and Elves, 50
And from them comes a silver flash of light,
As from the westward of a Summer's night ;
Or like a beauteous woman's large blue eyes
Gone mad thro' olden songs and poesies.

See ! what is coming from the distance dim ! 55
A golden Galley all in silken trim !
Three rows of oars are lightening, moment whiles,
Into the verd'rous bosoms of those isles ;
Towards the shade, under the Castle wall,
It comes in silence,—now 'tis hidden all. 60
The Clarion sounds, and from a Postern-gate
An echo of sweet music doth create
A fear in the poor Herdsman, who doth bring
His beasts to trouble the enchanted spring,—
He tells of the sweet music, and the spot, 65
To all his friends, and they believe him not.

O that our dreamings all, of sleep or wake,
Would all their colours from the sunset take :
From something of material sublime,
Rather than shadow our own soul's day-time 70
In the dark void of night. For in the world
We jostle,—but my flag is not unfurl'd

On the Admiral-staff,—and so philosophise
I dare not yet ! Oh, never will the prize,
High reason, and the love of good and ill, 75
Be my award ! Things cannot to the will
Be settled, but they tease us out of thought ;
Or is it that imagination brought
Beyond its proper bound, yet still confin'd,
Lost in a sort of Purgatory blind, 80
Cannot refer to any standard law
Of either earth or heaven ? It is a flaw
In happiness, to see beyond our bourn,—
It forces us in summer skies to mourn,
It spoils the singing of the Nightingale. 85

Dear Reynolds ! I have a mysterious tale,
And cannot speak it : the first page I read
Upon a Lampit rock of green sea-weed
Among the breakers ; 'twas a quiet eve,
The rocks were silent, the wide sea did weave 90
An untumultuous fringe of silver foam
Along the flat brown sand ; I was at home
And should have been most happy,—but I saw
Too far into the sea, where every maw
The greater on the less feeds evermore.— 95
But I saw too distinct into the core
Of an eternal fierce destruction,
And so from happiness I far was gone.
Still am I sick of it, and tho', to-day,
I've gather'd young spring-leaves, and flowers gay 100
Of periwinkle and wild strawberry,
Still do I that most fierce destruction see,—

FRAGMENT OF AN ODE TO MAIA 189

The Shark at savage prey,—the Hawk at pounce,—
The gentle Robin, like a Pard or Ounce,
Ravening a worm,—Away, ye horrid moods ! 105
Moods of one's mind ! You know I hate them well.
You know I'd sooner be a clapping Bell
To some Kamtschatkan Missionary Church,
Than with these horrid moods be left i' the lurch.

DAWLISH FAIR.

OVER the Hill and over the Dale,
And over the Bourne to Dawlish,
Where ginger-bread wives have a scanty sale,
And ginger-bread nuts are smallish.

FRAGMENT OF AN ODE TO MAIA,

WRITTEN ON MAY DAY 1818.

MOTHER of Hermes ! and still youthful Maia !
May I sing to thee
As thou wast hymned on the shores of Baïæ ?
Or may I woo thee
In earlier Sicilian ? or thy smiles
Seek as they once were sought, in Grecian isles,
By bards who died content on pleasant sward,
Leaving great verse unto a little clan ?
O, give me their old vigour, and unheard
Save of the quiet Primrose, and the span

Of heaven and few ears,
Rounded by thee, my song shall die away
Content as theirs,
Rich in the simple worship of a day.

SONG.

I.

HUSH, hush ! tread softly ! hush, hush my dear !
All the house is asleep, but we know very well
That the jealous, the jealous old bald-pate may hear,
Tho' you've padded his night-cap—O sweet
Isabel !
Tho' your feet are more light than a Faery's feet,
Who dances on bubbles where brooklets meet,—
Hush, hush ! soft tiptoe ! hush, hush my dear !
For less than a nothing the jealous can hear.

II.

No leaf doth tremble, no ripple is there
On the river,—all's still, and the night's sleepy eye
Closes up, and forgets all its Lethean care,
Charm'd to death by the drone of the humming
May-fly ;
And the Moon, whether prudish or complaisant,
Has fled to her bower, well knowing I want
No light in the dusk, no torch in the gloom,
But my Isabel's eyes, and her lips pulp'd with bloom.

III.

Lift the latch ! ah gently ! ah tenderly—sweet !

We are dead if that latchet gives one little clink !
 Well done—now those lips, and a flowery seat—
 The old man may sleep, and the planets may wink ;
 The shut rose shall dream of our loves, and
 awake
 Full blown, and such warmth for the morning
 take,
 The stock-dove shall hatch his soft twin-eggs and
 coo,
 While I kiss to the melody, aching all through !

EXTRACTS FROM AN OPERA,

O ! WERE I one of the Olympian twelve,
 Their godships should pass this into a law,—
 That when a man doth set himself in toil
 After some beauty veiled far away,
 Each step he took should make his lady's hand
 More soft, more white, and her fair cheek more
 fair :
 And for each briar-berry he might eat,
 A kiss should bud upon the tree of love,
 And pulp and ripen richer every hour,
 To melt away upon the traveller's lips.

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DAISY'S SONG.

I.

The sun, with his great eye,
Sees not so much as I ;
And the moon, all silver-proud,
Might as well be in a cloud.

II.

And O the spring—the spring !
I lead the life of a king !
Couch'd in the teeming grass,
I spy each pretty lass.

III.

I look where no one dares,
And I stare where no one stares,
And when the night is nigh,
Lambs bleat my lullaby.

* * * * *

FOLLY'S SONG.

When wedding fiddles are a-playing,
Huzza for folly O !
And when maidens go a-Maying,
Huzza, &c.

When a milk-pail is upset,
 Huzza, &c.
 And the clothes left in the wet,
 Huzza, &c.
 When the barrel's set abroach,
 Huzza, &c.
 When Kate Eyebrow keeps a coach,
 Huzza, &c.
 When the pig is over-roasted,
 Huzza, &c.
 And the cheese is over-toasted,
 Huzza, &c.
 When Sir Snap is with his lawyer,
 Huzza, &c.
 And Miss Chip has kiss'd the sawyer,
 Huzza, &c.

* * * * *

Oh, I am frighten'd with most hateful thoughts !
 Perhaps her voice is not a nightingale's,
 Perhaps her teeth are not the fairest pearl ;
 Her eye-lashes may be, for aught I know,
 Not longer than the May-fly's small fan-horns ;
 There may not be one dimple on her hand ;
 And freckles many ; ah ! a careless nurse,
 In haste to teach the little thing to walk,
 May have crumpt up a pair of Dian's legs,
 And warpt the ivory of a Juno's neck.

* * * * *

SONG.

I.

THE stranger lighted from his steed,
And ere he spake a word,
He seiz'd my lady's lily hand,
And kiss'd it all unheard.

II.

The stranger walk'd into the hall,
And ere he spake a word,
He kiss'd my lady's cherry lips,
And kiss'd 'em all unheard.

III.

The stranger walk'd into the bower,—
But my lady first did go,—
Aye hand in hand into the bower,
Where my lord's roses blow.

IV.

My lady's maid had a silken scarf,
And a golden ring had she,
And a kiss from the stranger, as off he went
Again on his fair palfrey.

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Asleep ! O sleep a little while, white pearl !
And let me kneel, and let me pray to thee,
And let me call Heaven's blessing on thine eyes.

And let me breathe into the happy air,
That doth enfold and touch thee all about,
Vows of my slavery, my giving up,
My sudden adoration, my great love !

SONG.

I HAD a dove and the sweet dove died ;
And I have thought it died of grieving :
O, what could it grieve for ? Its feet were tied,
With a silken thread of my own hand's weaving ;
Sweet little red feet ! why should you die—
Why should you leave me, sweet bird ! why ?
You liv'd alone in the forest-tree,
Why, pretty thing ! would you not live with me ?
I kiss'd you oft and gave you white peas ;
Why not live sweetly, as in the green trees ?

SONNET.

TO A LADY SEEN FOR A FEW MOMENTS AT
VAUXHALL.

TIME's sea hath been five years at its slow ebb,
Long hours have to and fro let creep the sand,
Since I was tangled in thy beauty's web,
And snared by the ungloving of thine hand.
And yet I never look on midnight sky,
But I behold thine eyes' well memoried light ;
I cannot look upon the rose's dye,
But to thy cheek my soul doth take its flight.

I cannot look on any budding flower,
But my fond ear, in fancy at thy lips
And harkening for a love-sound, doth devour
Its sweets in the wrong sense :—Thou dost
eclipse
Every delight with sweet remembering,
And grief unto my darling joys dost bring.

SONNET.

ON VISITING THE TOMB OF BURNS.

THE town, the churchyard, and the setting sun,
The clouds, the trees, the rounded hills all
seem,
Though beautiful, cold—strange—as in a dream,
I dreamed long ago, now new begun.
The short-lived, paly Summer is but won
From Winter's ague, for one hour's gleam ;
Though sapphire-warm, their stars do never
beam :
All is cold Beauty ; pain is never done :
For who has mind to relish, Minos-wise,
The Real of Beauty, free from that dead hue
Sickly imagination and sick pride
Cast wan upon it ! Burns ! with honour due
I oft have honour'd thee. Great shadow !
hide
Thy face ; I sin against thy native skies.

MEG MERRILIES.

I.

OLD MEG she was a Gipsy,
And liv'd upon the Moors :
Her bed it was the brown heath turf,
And her house was out of doors.

II.

Her apples were swart blackberries,
Her currants pods o' broom ;
Her wine was dew of the wild white rose,
Her book a churchyard tomb.

III.

Her Brothers were the craggy hills,
Her Sisters larchen trees —
Alone with her great family
She liv'd as she did please.

IV.

No breakfast had she many a morn,
No dinner many a noon,
And 'stead of supper she would stare
Full hard against the Moon.

V.

But every morn of woodbine fresh
She made her garlanding,
And every night the dark glen Yew
She wove, and she would sing.

VI.

And with her fingers old and brown
She plaited Mats o' Rushes,
And gave them to the Cottagers
She met among the Bushes.

VII.

Old Meg was brave as Margaret Queen
And tall as Amazon :
An old red blanket cloak she wore ;
A chip hat had she on.
God rest her aged bones somewhere—
She died full long ago !

A SONG ABOUT MYSELF.

I.

THERE was a naughty Boy,
A naughty boy was he,
He would not stop at home,
He could not quiet be—
He took
In his Knapsack
A Book
Full of vowels
And a shirt
With some towels—
A slight cap

For night cap—
A hair brush,
Comb ditto,
New Stockings
For old ones
Would split O !
This Knapsack
Tight at's back
He rivetted close
And followéd his Nose
To the North,
To the North,
And follow'd his nose
To the North.

II.

There was a naughty boy
And a naughty boy was he,
For nothing would he do
But scribble poetry—
He took
An inkstand
In his hand
And a Pen
Big as ten
In the other,
And away
In a Pother
He ran
To the mountains
And fountains

And ghostes
And Postes
And witches
And ditches
And wrote
In his coat
When the weather
Was cool,
Fear of gout,
And without
When the weather
Was warm—
Och the charm
When we choose
To follow one's nose
To the north,
To the north,
To follow one's nose
To the north !

III.

There was a naughty boy
And a naughty boy was he,
He kept little fishes
In washing tubs three
In spite
Of the might
Of the Maid
Nor afraid
Of his Granny-good—
He often would

Hurly burly
Get up early
And go
By hook or crook
To the brook
And bring home
Miller's thumb,
Tittlebat
Not over fat,
Minnows small
As the stall
Of a glove,
Not above
The size
Of a nice
Little Baby's
Little fingers—
O he made
'Twas his trade
Of Fish a pretty Kettle
A Kettle—
A Kettle
Of fish a pretty Kettle
A Kettle !

IV.

There was a naughty Boy,
And a naughty Boy was he,
He ran away to Scotland
The people for to see—

Then he found
That the ground
Was as hard,
That a yard
Was as long,
That a song
Was as merry,
That a cherry
Was as red—
That lead
Was as weighty,
That fourscore
Was as eighty,
That a door
Was as wooden
As in England—
So he stood in his shoes
And he wonder'd,
He wonder'd,
He stood in his shoes
And he wonder'd.

SONNET.

TO AILSA ROCK.

HEARKEN, thou craggy ocean pyramid !
Give answer from thy voice, the sea-fowls' screams !
When were thy shoulders mantled in huge streams ?
When, from the sun, was thy broad forehead hid ?
How long is't since the mighty power bid

Thee heave to airy sleep from fathom dreams?
Sleep in the lap of thunder or sunbeams,
Or when grey clouds are thy cold coverlid.
Thou answer'st not ; for thou art dead asleep ;
Thy life is but two dead eternities—
The last in air, the former in the deep ;
First with the whales, last with the eagle-skies—
Drown'd wast thou till an earthquake made thee
steep,
Another cannot wake thy giant size.

SONNET.

WRITTEN IN THE COTTAGE WHERE BURNS
WAS BORN.

THIS mortal body of a thousand days
Now fills, O Burns, a space in thine own room,
Where thou didst dream alone on budded bays,
Happy and thoughtless of thy day of doom !
My pulse is warm with thine own barley-bree,
My head is light with pledging a great soul,
My eyes are wandering, and I cannot see,
Fancy is dead and drunken at its goal ;
Yet can I stamp my foot upon thy floor,
Yet can I ope thy window-sash to find
The meadow thou hast tramped o'er and o'er,—
Yet can I think of thee till thought is blind,—
Yet can I gulp a bumper to thy name,—
O smile among the shades, for this is fame !

LINES WRITTEN IN THE HIGHLANDS

AFTER A VISIT TO BURNS'S COUNTRY.

THERE is a charm in footing slow across a silent
plain,
Where patriot battle has been fought, where glory
had the gain ;
There is a pleasure on the heath where Druids old
have been,
Where mantles grey have rustled by and swept the
nettles green ;
There is a joy in every spot made known by times
of old, 5
New to the feet, although each tale a hundred times
be told ;
There is a deeper joy than all, more solemn in the
heart,
More parching to the tongue than all, of more divine
a smart,
When weary steps forget themselves upon a pleasant
turf,
Upon hot sand, or flinty road, or sea-shore iron
scurf, 10
Toward the castle or the cot, where long ago was born
One who was great through mortal days, and died of
fame unshorn.
Light heather-bells may tremble then, but they are
far away ;
Wood-lark may sing from sandy fern,—the Sun may
hear his lay ;

Runnels may kiss the grass on shelves and shallows
clear, 15
But their low voices are not heard, though come on
travels drear ;
Blood-red the Sun may set behind black mountain
peaks ;
Blue tides may sluice and drench their time in caves
and weedy creeks ;
Eagles may seem to sleep wing-wide upon the air ;
Ring-doves may fly convuls'd across to some high-
cedar'd lair ; 20
But the forgotten eye is still fast lidded to the
ground,
As Palmer's, that with weariness, mid-desert shrine
hath found.
At such a time the soul's a child, in childhood is the
brain ;
Forgotten is the worldly heart—alone, it beats in
vain.—
Aye, if a madman could have leave to pass a health-
ful day 25
To tell his forehead's swoon and faint when first began
decay,
He might make tremble many a one whose spirit had
gone forth
To find a Bard's low cradle-place about the silent
North !
Scanty the hour and few the steps beyond the bourn
of care,
Beyond the sweet and bitter world,—beyond it
unaware ! 30

Scanty the hour and few the steps, because a longer
stay

Would bar return, and make a man forget his mortal
way :

O horrible ! to lose the sight of well remember'd face,
Of Brother's eyes, of Sister's brow—constant to every
place ;

Filling the air, as on we move, with portraiture
intense ; 35

More warm than those heroic tints that pain a
painter's sense,

When shapes of old come striding by, and visages of
old,

Locks shining black, hair scanty grey, and passions
manifold.

No, no, that horror cannot be, for at the cable's length
Man feels the gentle anchor pull and gladdens in its
strength :— 40

One hour, half-idiot, he stands by mossy waterfall,
But in the very next he reads his soul's memorial :—
He reads it on the mountain's height, where chance
he may sit down

Upon rough marble diadem—that hill's eternal crown.
Yet be his anchor e'er so fast, room is there for a
prayer 45

That man may never lose his mind on mountains
black and bare ;

That he may stray league after league some great
birthplace to find

And keep his vision clear from speck, his inward
sight unblind.

STAFFA.

NOT Aladdin magian
Ever such a work began ;
Not the wizard of the Dee
Ever such a dream could see ;
Not St. John, in Patmos' Isle, 5
In the passion of his toil,
When he saw the churches seven,
Golden-aisled, built up in heaven,
Gaz'd at such a rugged wonder,
As I stood its roofing under. 10
Lo ! I saw one sleeping there,
On the marble cold and bare ;
While the surges wash'd his feet,
And his garments white did beat
Drench'd about the sombre rocks ; 15
On his neck his well-grown locks,
Lifted dry above the main,
Were upon the curl again.
"What is this? and what art thou?"
Whisper'd I, and touch'd his brow ; 20
"What art thou? and what is this?"
Whisper'd I, and strove to kiss
The Spirit's hand, to wake his eyes ;
Up he started in a trice :
"I am Lycidas," said he, 25
"Fam'd in funeral minstrelsy !
This was architectur'd thus
By the great Oceanus !—

Here his mighty waters play
 Hollow organs all the day ; 30
 Here, by turns, his dolphins all,
 Finny palmers, great and small,
 Come to pay devotion due,—
 Each a mouth of pearls must strew !
 Many a mortal of these days, 35
 Dares to pass our sacred ways ;
 Dares to touch, audaciously,
 This cathedral of the sea !
 I have been the Pontiff-priest,
 Where the waters never rest, 40
 Where a fledgy sea-bird choir
 Soars for ever ! Holy fire
 I have hid from mortal man ;
 Proteus is my Sacristan !
 But the dulled eye of mortal 45
 Hath pass'd beyond the rocky portal ;
 So for ever will I leave
 Such a taint, and soon unweave
 All the magic of the place.”
 So saying, with a Spirit's glance 50
 He dived !

SONNET.

WRITTEN UPON THE TOP OF BEN NEVIS.

READ me a lesson, Muse, and speak it loud
 Upon the top of Nevis, blind in mist !
 I look into the chasms, and a shroud
 Vapourous doth hide them,—just so much I wist

Mankind do know of hell ; I look o'erhead,
 And there is sullen mist,—even so much
 Mankind can tell of heaven ; mist is spread
 Before the earth, beneath me,—even such,
 Even so vague is man's sight of himself !

Here are the craggy stones beneath my feet,—
 Thus much I know that, a poor witless elf,

I tread on them,—that all my eye doth meet
 Is mist and crag, not only on this height,
 But in the world of thought and mental might !

A PROPHECY :

TO GEORGE KEATS IN AMERICA.

'Tis the witching hour of night,
 Orbed is the moon and bright,
 And the stars they glisten, glisten,
 Seeming with bright eyes to listen—
 For what listen they ?

5

For a song and for a charm,
 See they glisten in alarm,
 And the moon is waxing warm
 To hear what I shall say.

Moon ! keep wide thy golden ears—
 Harken, stars ! and hearken, spheres !—
 Harken, thou eternal sky !

10

I sing an infant's lullaby,
 O pretty lullaby.

Listen, listen, listen, listen, 15
Glisten, glisten, glisten, glisten,
And hear my lullaby !
Though the rushes that will make
Its cradle still are in the lake—
Though the linen that will be 20
Its swathe, is on the cotton tree—
Though the woollen that will keep
It warm, is on the silly sheep—
Listen, starlight, listen, listen,
Glisten, glisten, glisten, glisten, 25
And hear my lullaby !
Child, I see thee ! Child, I've found thee
Midst of the quiet all around thee !
Child, I see thee ! Child, I spy thee !
And thy mother sweet is nigh thee ! 30
Child, I know thee ! Child no more,
But a Poet evermore !
See, see, the lyre, the lyre,
In a flame of fire,
Upon the little cradle's top 35
Flaring, flaring, flaring,
Past the eyesight's bearing.
Awake it from its sleep,
And see if it can keep
Its eyes upon the blaze— 40
Amaze, amaze !
It stares, it stares, it stares.
It dares what no one dares !
It lifts its little hand into the flame
Unharm'd, and on the strings 45

Paddies a little tune, and sings,
 With dumb endeavour sweetly—
 Bard art thou completely !
 Little child
 O' th' western wild, 50
 Bard art thou completely !
 Sweetly with dumb endeavour,
 A Poet now or never.
 Little child
 O' th' western wild, 55
 A Poet now or never !

TRANSLATION FROM A SONNET
 OF RONSARD.

NATURE withheld Cassandra in the skies,
 For more adornment, a full thousand years ;
 She took their cream of Beauty's fairest dyes,
 And shaped and tinted her above all peers :
 Meanwhile Love kept her dearly with his wings,
 And underneath their shadow fill'd her eyes
 With such a richness that the cloudy Kings
 Of high Olympus utter'd slavish sighs.
 When from the Heavens I saw her first descend,
 My heart took fire, and only burning pains,
 They were my pleasures—they my Life's sad
 end ;
 Love pour'd her beauty into my warm veins. . .

* * * * *

THE EVE OF SAINT MARK.

A FRAGMENT.

UPON a Sabbath-day it fell ;
Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell.
That call'd the folk to evening prayer ;
The city streets were clean and fair
From wholesome drench of April rains ; 5
And, on the western window panes,
The chilly sunset faintly told
Of unmatured green vallies cold,
Of the green thorny bloomless hedge,
Of rivers new with spring-tide sedge, 10
Of primroses by shelter'd rills,
And daisies on the aguish hills.
Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell :
The silent streets were crowded well
With staid and pious companies, 15
Warm from their fire-side orat'ries ;
And moving, with demurest air,
To even-song, and vesper prayer.
Each arched porch, and entry low,
Was fill'd with patient folk and slow, 20
With whispers hush, and shuffling feet,
While play'd the organ loud and sweet.

The bells had ceas'd, the prayers begun,
And Bertha had not yet half done

A curious volume, patch'd and torn, 25
That all day long, from earliest morn,
Had taken captive her two eyes,
Among its golden broideries ;
Perplex'd her with a thousand things,—
The stars of Heaven, and angels' wings, 30
Martyrs in a fiery blaze,
Azure saints and silver rays,
Moses' breastplate, and the seven
Candlesticks John saw in Heaven,
The winged Lion of Saint Mark, 35
And the Covenantal Ark,
With its many mysteries,
Cherubim and golden mice.

Bertha was a maiden fair,
Dwelling in th' old minster-square ; 40
From her fire-side she could see,
Sidelong, its rich antiquity,
Far as the Bishop's garden-wall ;
Where sycamores and elm-trees tall,
Full-leaved, the forest had outstript, 45
By no sharp north-wind ever nipt,
So shelter'd by the mighty pile.
Bertha arose, and read awhile,
With forehead 'gainst the window-pane.
Again she tried, and then again, 50
Until the dusk eve left her dark
Upon the legend of St. Mark.
From plaited lawn-frill, fine and thin,
She lifted up her soft warm chin,

With aching neck and swimming eyes, 55
And dazed with saintly imageries.
All was gloom, and silent all,
Save now and then the still foot-fall
Of one returning homewards late,
Past the echoing minster-gate. 60
The clamorous daws, that all the day
Above tree-tops and towers play,
Pair by pair had gone to rest,
Each in its ancient belfry-nest,
Where asleep they fall betimes, 65
To music and the drowsy chimes.

All was silent, all was gloom,
Abroad and in the homely room :
Down she sat, poor cheated soul !
And struck a lamp from the dismal coal ; 70
Lean'd forward, with bright drooping hair
And slant book, full against the glare.
Her shadow, in uneasy guise,
Hover'd about, a giant size,
On ceiling-beam and old oak chair, 75
The parrot's cage, and panel square ;
And the warm angled winter-screen,
On which were many monsters seen,
Call'd doves of Siam, Lima mice,
And legless birds of Paradise, 80
Macaw, and tender Avadavat,
And silken-furr'd Angora cat.
Untired she read, her shadow still

Glowr'd about, as it would fill
The room with wildest forms and shades, 85
As though some ghostly queen of spades
Had come to mock behind her back,
And dance, and rufle her garments black.
Untired she read the legend page,
Of holy Mark, from youth to age, 90
On land, on sea, in pagan chains,
Rejoicing for his many pains.
Sometimes the learned eremite,
With golden star, or dagger bright,
Referr'd to pious poesies 95
Written in smallest crow-quill size
Beneath the text ; and thus the rhyme
Was parcell'd out from time to time :
——“ Als writith he of swevenis,
Men han beforne they wake in bliss, 100
Whanne that hir friendes thinke him bound
In crimped shroude farre under grounde ;
And how a litling child mote be
A saint er its nativitie,
Gif that the modre (God her blesse !) 105
Kepen in solitarinesse,
And kissen devoute the holy croce.
Of Goddes love, and Sathan's force,—
He writith ; and thinges many mo
Of swiche thinges I may not shew 110
Bot I must tellen verilie
Somdel of Saintè Cicilie,
And chieflie what he auctorethe
Of Saintè Markis life and dethe : ”

At length her constant eyelids come
 Upon the fervent martyrdom ;
 Then lastly to his holy shrine,
 Exalt amid the tapers' shine
 At Venice,—

115

ODE TO FANNY.

I.

PHYSICIAN Nature ! let my spirit blood !
 O ease my heart of verse and let me rest ;
 Throw me upon thy Tripod, till the flood
 Of stifling numbers ebbs from my full breast.
 A theme ! a theme ! great nature ! give a theme ;
 Let me begin my dream.
 I come—I see thee, as thou standest there,
 Beckon me not into the wintry air.

II.

Ah ! dearest love, sweet home of all my fears,
 And hopes, and joys, and panting miseries,—
 To-night, if I may guess, thy beauty wears
 A smile of such delight,
 As brilliant and as bright,
 As when with ravish'd, aching, vassal eyes,
 Lost in soft amaze,
 I gaze, I gaze !

III.

Who now, with greedy looks, eats up my feast ?

What stare outfaces now my silver moon !

Ah ! keep that hand unravish'd at the least ;

Let, let, the amorous burn—

But, pr'ythee, do not turn

The current of your heart from me so soon.

O ! save, in charity,

The quickest pulse for me.

IV.

Save it for me, sweet love ! though music breathe

Voluptuous visions into the warm air,

Though swimming through the dance's dangerous
wreath ;

Be like an April day,

Smiling and cold and gay,

A temperate lily, temperate as fair ;

Then, Heaven ! there will be

A warmer June for me.

V.

Why, this—you'll say, my Fanny ! is not true :

Put your soft hand upon your snowy side,

Where the heart beats : confess—'tis nothing new—

Must not a woman be

A feather on the sea,

Sway'd to and fro by every wind and tide ?

Of as uncertain speed

As blow-ball from the mead ?

VI.

I know it—and to know it is despair
To one who loves you as I love, sweet Fanny !
Whose heart goes fluttering for you every where,
Nor, when away you roam,
Dare keep its wretched home,
Love, love alone, his pains severe and many :
Then, loveliest ! keep me free,
From torturing jealousy.

VII.

Ah ! if you prize my subdued soul above
The poor, the fading, brief, pride of an hour ;
Let none profane my Holy See of love,
Or with a rude hand break
The sacramental cake :
Let none else touch the just new-budded flower ;
If not—may my eyes close,
Love ! on their last repose.

ODE ON INDOLENCE.

“ They toil not, neither do they spin.”

I.

ONE morn before me were three figures seen,
With bowed necks, and joined hands, side-faced ;
And one behind the other stepp'd serene,
In placid sandals, and in white robes graced ;

They pass'd, like figures on a marble urn,
When shifted round to see the other side ;
They came again ; as when the urn once more
Is shifted round, the first seen shades return ;
And they were strange to me, as may betide
With vases, to one deep in Phidian lore.

II.

How is it, Shadows ! that I knew ye not ?
How came ye muffled in so hush a mask ?
Was it a silent deep-disguised plot
To steal away, and leave without a task
My idle days ? Ripe was the drowsy hour ;
The blissful cloud of summer-indolence
Benumb'd my eyes ; my pulse grew less and less ;
Pain had no sting, and pleasure's wreath no flower :
O, why did ye not melt, and leave my sense
Unhaunted quite of all but—nothingness ?

III.

A third time pass'd they by, and, passing, turn'd
Each one the face a moment whiles to me ;
Then faded, and to follow them I burn'd
And ach'd for wings, because I knew the three ;
The first was a fair Maid, and Love her name ;
The second was Ambition, pale of cheek,
And ever watchful with fatigued eye ;
The last, whom I love more, the more of blame
Is heap'd upon her, maiden most unmeek,—
I knew to be my demon Poesy.

IV.

They faded, and, forsooth ! I wanted wings :
O folly ! What is Love ? and where is it ?
And for that poor Ambition ! it springs
From a man's little heart's short fever-fit ;
For Poesy !—no,—she has not a joy,—
At least for me,—so sweet as drowsy noons,
And evenings steep'd in honied indolence ;
O, for an age so shelter'd from annoy,
That I may never know how change the moons,
Or hear the voice of busy common-sense !

V.

And once more came they by ;—alas ! wherefore ?
My sleep had been embroider'd with dim dreams ;
My soul had been a lawn besprinkled o'er
With flowers, and stirring shades, and baffled beams :
The morn was clouded, but no shower fell,
Tho' in her lids hung the sweet tears of May ;
The open casement press'd a new-leav'd vine,
Let in the budding warmth and throstle's lay ;
O Shadows ! 'twas a time to bid farewell !
Upon your skirts had fallen no tears of mine.

VI.

So, ye three Ghosts, adieu ! Ye cannot raise
My head cool-bedded in the flowery grass ;
For I would not be dieted with praise,
A pet-lamb in a sentimental farce !

Fade softly from my eyes, and be once more
In masque-like figures on the dreamy urn ;
Farewell ! I yet have visions for the night,
And for the day faint visions there is store ;
Vanish, ye Phantoms ! from my idle spright,
Into the clouds, and never more return !

SONNET.

WHY did I laugh to-night ? No voice will tell :
No God, no Demon of severe response,
Deigns to reply from Heaven or from Hell.
Then to my human heart I turn at once.
Heart ! Thou and I are here sad and alone ;
I say, why did I laugh ? O mortal pain !
O Darkness ! Darkness ! ever must I moan,
To question Heaven and Hell and Heart in vain.
Why did I laugh ? I know this Being's lease,
My fancy to its utmost blisses spreads ;
Yet could I on this very midnight cease,
And the world's gaudy ensigns see in shreds ;
Verse, Fame, and Beauty are intense indeed,
But Death intenser—Death is Life's high meed.

SONNET.

A DREAM, AFTER READING DANTE'S EPISODE OF
PAULO AND FRANCESCA.

As Hermes once took to his feathers light,
When lulled Argus, baffled, swoon'd and slept,
So on a Delphic reed, my idle spright
So play'd, so charm'd, so conquer'd, so bereft

The dragon-world of all its hundred eyes ;
 And, seeing it asleep, so fled away—
 Not to pure Ida with its snow-cold skies,
 Nor unto Tempe where Jove grieved that day ;
 But to that second circle of sad hell,
 Where in the gust, the whirlwind, and the flaw
 Of rain and hail-stones, lovers need not tell
 Their sorrows. Pale were the sweet lips I saw,
 Pale were the lips I kiss'd, and fair the form
 I floated with, about that melancholy storm.

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI.*

I.

O, what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,†
 Alone and palely loitering ;
 The sedge is ‡ wither'd from the lake,
 And no birds sing.

II.

O, what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,†
 So haggard and so woe-begone ?
 The squirrel's granary is full,
 And the harvest's done.

* This poem was first printed in *The Indicator*, May 10, 1820, over the signature "Caviare;" the text adopted is that of the journal letter to George Keats, Feb. 14-May 3, 1819.

† "Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight" (*Indicator*).

‡ "Has" (*Indicator*).

III.

I see a lily on thy brow,
With anguish moist and fever dew ;
And on thy cheek a fading rose
Fast withereth too.

IV.

I met a lady in the meads
Full beautiful, a faery's child ;
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

V.*

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone ;
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

VI.

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long ;
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery's song.

* In *The Indicator* stanzas 5 and 6 are transposed, and the third line in stanza 6 is—

“For sideways would she lean and sing.”

VII.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew ;
And sure in language strange she said,
“ I love thee true ! ”

VIII.

She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept and sigh'd full sore,*
And there I shut her wild wild † eyes—
With kisses four. ‡

IX.

And there we slumbered on the moss,§
And there I dream'd, ah ! woe betide !
The latest dream I ever dreamt
On the cold hill side.

X.

I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all ;
Who cry'd—“ La belle Dame sans merci
Thee hath in thrall ! ”

* “ And there she gaz'd and sighed deep ” (*Indicator*).

† “ Sad ” (*Indicator*).

‡ “ So kiss'd to sleep ” (*Indicator*).

§ “ And there she lulled me asleep ” (*Indicator*).

XI.

I saw their starv'd lips in the gloam
With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I awoke, and found me here
On the cold hill's side.

XII.

And this is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

SONG OF FOUR FAERIES.

FIRE, AIR, EARTH, AND WATER,

SALAMANDER, ZEPHYR, DUSKETHA, AND BREAMA.

SALAMANDER.

HAPPY, happy glowing fire !

ZEPHYR.

Fragrant air ! delicious light !

DUSKETHA.

Let me to my glooms retire !

BREAMA.

I to green-weed rivers bright !

SALAMANDER.

| | |
|---|----|
| Happy, happy glowing fire ! | 5 |
| Dazzling bowers of soft retire, | |
| Ever let my nourish'd wing, | |
| Like a bat's, still wandering, | |
| Faintly fan your fiery spaces, | |
| Spirit sole in deadly places. | 10 |
| In unhaunted roar and blaze, | |
| Open eyes that never daze, | |
| Let me see the myriad shapes | |
| Of men, and beasts, and fish, and apes, | |
| Portray'd in many a fiery den, | 15 |
| And wrought by spumy bitumen. | |
| On the deep intenser roof, | |
| Arched every way aloof, | |
| Let me breathe upon their skies, | |
| And anger their live tapestries ; | 20 |
| Free from cold, and every care, | |
| Of chilly rain, and shivering air. | |

ZEPHYR.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Spright of Fire ! away ! away ! | |
| Or your very roundelay | |
| Will sear my plumage newly budded | 25 |
| From its quilled sheath and studded | |
| With the self-same dews that fell | |
| On the May-grown Asphodel. | |
| Spright of Fire—away ! away ! | |

BREAMA.

Spright of Fire—away ! away ! 20
Zephyr, blue-eyed Faery, turn,
And see my cool sedge-shaded urn,
Where it rests its mossy brim
'Mid water-mint and cresses dim ;
And the flowers, in sweet troubles, 35
Lift their eyes above the bubbles,
Like our Queen, when she would please
To sleep, and Oberon *will* tease.
Love me, blue-eyed Faery, true !
Soothly I am sick for you. 40

ZEPHYR.

Gentle Breama ! by the first
Violet young nature nurst,
I will bathe myself with thee,
So you sometime follow me
To my home, far, far, in west, 45
Beyond the nimble-wheeled quest
Of the golden-browed sun :
Come with me, o'er tops of trees,
To my fragrant palaces,
Where they ever floating are 50
Beneath the cherish of a star
Call'd Vesper, who with silver veil
Ever hides his brilliance pale,
Ever gently-drows'd doth keep
Twilight for the Fays to sleep. 55

Fear not that your watery hair
 Will thirst in drouthy ringlets there ;
 Clouds of stored summer rains
 Thou shalt taste, before the stains
 Of the mountain soil they take,
 And too unlucent for thee make.
 I love thee, crystal Faery, true !
 Sooth I am as sick for you !

60

SALAMANDER.

Out, ye aguish Faeries, out !
 Chilly lovers, what a rout
 Keep ye with your frozen breath,
 Colder than the mortal death.
 Adder-eyed Dusketha, speak,
 Shall we leave these, and go seek
 In the earth's wide entrails old
 Couches warm as their's are cold ?
 O for a fiery gloom and thee,
 Dusketha, so enchantingly
 Freckle-wing'd and lizard-sided !

65

70

DUSKETHA.

By thee, Spright, will I be guided !
 I care not for cold or heat ;
 Frost and flame, or sparks, or sleet,
 To my essence are the same ;—
 But I honour more the flame.
 Spright of Fire, I follow thee
 Wheresoever it may be,

75

80

To the torrid spouts and fountains.
Underneath earth-quaked mountains ;
Or, at thy supreme desire,
Touch the very pulse of fire
With my bare unlidded eyes.

25

SALAMANDER.

Sweet Dusketha ! paradise !
Off, ye icy Spirits, fly !
Frosty creatures of the sky !

DUSKETHA.

Breathe upon them, fiery Spright !

90

ZEPHYR, BREAMA (*to each other*).

Away ! away ! to our delight !

SALAMANDER.

Go, feed on icicles, while we
Bedded in tongued-flames will be.

DUSKETHA.

Lead me to those feverous glooms,
Spright of Fire !

BREAMA.

Me to the blooms,
Blue-eyed Zephyr, of those flowers
Far in the west where the May-cloud lowers ;

95

And the beams of still Vesper, when winds are
 all wist,
 Are shed thro' the rain and the milder mist,
 And twilight your floating bowers. 100

TWO SONNETS ON FAME.

"You cannot eat your cake and have it too."—*Proverb.*

I.

How fever'd is the man, who cannot look
 Upon his mortal days with temperate blood,
 Who vexes all the leaves of his life's book,
 And robs his fair name of its maidenhood ;
 It is as if the rose should pluck herself,
 Or the ripe plum finger its misty bloom,
 As if a clear lake, meddling with itself,
 Should cloud its clearness with a muddy gloom.*
 But the rose leaves herself upon the briar,
 For winds to kiss and grateful bees to feed.
 And the ripe plum still wears its dim attire,
 The undisturbed lake has crystal space,
 Why then should man, teasing the world for
 grace,
 Spoil his salvation for a fierce miscreed ?

* Lord Houghton printed : —

"As if a Naiad, like a meddling elf,
 Should darken her pure grot with muddy gloom."

The text is from the journal-letter of Feb. 14—May 3,
 1819.

II.

FAME, like a wayward girl, will still be coy
To those who woo her with too slavish knees,
But makes surrender to some thoughtless boy,
And dotes the more upon a heart at ease :
She is a Gipsy, will not speak to those
Who have not learnt to be content without her ;
A Jilt, whose ear was never whisper'd close,
Who thinks they scandal her who talk about her.
A very Gipsy is she, Nilus-born,
Sister-in-law to jealous Potiphar ;
Ye love-sick Bards, repay her scorn for scorn,
Ye Artists lovelorn, madmen that ye are !
Make your best bow to her and bid adieu,
Then, if she likes it, she will follow you.

SONNET.

TO SLEEP.

O SOFT embalmer of the still midnight,
Shutting with careful fingers and benign,
Our gloom-pleased eyes, embowered from the light,
Enshaded in forgetfulness divine :
O soothing Sleep ! if so it please thee, close,
In midst of this thine hymn, my willing eyes,
Or wait the amen, ere thy poppy throws
Around my bed its lulling charities ;
Then save me, or the passed day will shine
Upon my pillow, breeding many woes,—

Save me from curious conscience, that still
 lords
Its strength for darkness, burrowing like a mole ;
 Turn the key deftly in the oiled wards,
And seal the hushed casket of my soul.

SONNET.

IF by dull rhymes our English must be chained,
And, like Andromeda, the Sonnet sweet
Fetter'd, in spite of pained loveliness ;
Let us find out, if we must be constrain'd,
Sandals more interwoven and complete
To fit the naked foot of Poesy ;
Let us inspect the Lyre, and weigh the stress
Of every chord, and see what may be gain'd
By ear industrious, and attention meet ;
Misers of sound and syllable, no less
Than Midas of his coinage, let us be
Jealous of dead leaves in the bay wreath crown,
So, if we may not let the Muse be free,
She will be bound with garlands of her own.

A PARTY OF LOVERS.

PENSIVE they sit, and roll their languid eyes.
Nibble their toast, and cool their tea with sighs,
Or else forget the purpose of the night,
Forget their tea—forget their appetite.
See with cross'd arms they sit—ah ! hapless crew 5

The fire is going out and no one rings
 For coals, and therefore no coals Betty brings.
 A fly is in the milk-pot—must he die
 Circled by a humane society?
 No, no ; there Mr. Werter takes his spoon, 10
 Inserts it, dips the handle, and lo ! soon
 The little straggler, sav'd from perils dark,
 Across the teaboard draws a long wet mark.
 Romeo ! arise ! take snuffers by the handle,
 There's a large cauliflower in each candle. 15
 A winding-sheet, ah me ! I must away
 To No. 7, just beyond the circus gay.
 "Alas, my friend ! your coat sits very well ;
 Where may your tailor live ?" "I may not tell.
 O pardon me—I'm absent now and then.
 Where might my tailor live ? I say again
 I cannot tell, let me no more be teased—
 He lives in Wapping, *might* live where he pleas'd."

SONNET.

THE day is gone, and all its sweets are gone !
 Sweet voice, sweet lips, soft hand, and softer breast,
 Warm breath, light whisper, tender semi-tone,
 Bright eyes, accomplish'd shape, and lang'rous
 waist !
 Faded the flower and all its budded charms,
 Faded the sight of beauty from my eyes,
 Faded the shape of beauty from my arms,
 Faded the voice, warmth, whiteness, paradise—

Vanish'd unseasonably at shut of eve,
 When the dusk holiday—or holinight
 Of fragrant-curtain'd love begins to weave
 The woof of darkness thick, for hid delight ;
 But, as I've read love's missal through to-day,
 He'll let me sleep, seeing I fast and pray.

LINES TO FANNY

WHAT can I do to drive away
 Remembrance from my eyes? for they have seen,
 Aye, an hour ago, my brilliant Queen !
 Touch has a memory. O say, love, say,
 What can I do to kill it and be free 5
 In my old liberty?
 When every fair one that I saw was fair,
 Enough to catch me in but half a snare,
 Not keep me there :
 When, howe'er poor or particolour'd things, 10
 My muse had wings,
 And ever ready was to take her course
 Whither I bent her force,
 Unintellectual, yet divine to me ;—
 Divine, I say !—What sea-bird o'er the sea 15
 Is a philosopher the while he goes
 Winging along where the great water throes?

How shall I do
 To get anew
 Those moulted feathers, and so mount once more 20

Above, above

The reach of fluttering Love,
And make him cower lowly while I soar?
Shall I gulp wine? No, that is vulgarism,
A heresy and schism,

25

Foisted into the canon law of love;—
No,—wine is only sweet to happy men;
More dismal cares

Seize on me unawares,—
Where shall I learn to get my peace again?
To banish thoughts of that most hateful land,
Dungeoner of my friends, that wicked strand
Where they were wreck'd and live a wrecked life;
That monstrous region, whose dull rivers pour,
Ever from their sordid urns unto the shore,

30

35

Unown'd of any weedy-haired gods;
Whose winds, all zephyrless, hold scourging rods,
Iced in the great lakes, to afflict mankind;
Whose rank-grown forests, frosted, black, and blind,
Would fright a Dryad; whose harsh herbage meads
Make lean and lank the starv'd ox while he feeds;
There bad flowers have no scent, birds no sweet
song,

And great unerring Nature once seems wrong.

O, for some sunny spell
To dissipate the shadows of this hell!
Say they are gone,—with the new dawning light
Steps forth my lady bright!
O, let me once more rest
My soul upon that dazzling breast!

45

Let once again these aching arms be placed, 50
 The tender gaolers of thy waist !
 And let me feel that warm breath here and there
 To spread a rapture in my very hair,—
 O, the sweetness of the pain !
 Give me those lips again ! 55
 Enough ! Enough ! it is enough for me
 To dream of thee !

SONNET TO FANNY.

I CRY your mercy—pity—love !—aye, love !
 Merciful love that tantalises not,
 One-thoughted, never-wandering, guileless love,
 Unmask'd, and being seen—without a blot !
 O ! let me have thee whole,—all—all—be mine !
 That shape, that fairness, that sweet minor
 zest
 Of love, your kiss,—those hands, those eyes
 divine,
 That warm, white, lucent, million-pleasured
 breast,—
 Yourself—your soul—in pity give me all,
 Withhold no atom's atom or I die,
 Or living on perhaps, your wretched thrall,
 Forget, in the mist of idle misery,
 Life's purposes,—the palate of my mind
 Losing its gust, and my ambition blind !

SONNET.

WRITTEN ON A BLANK PAGE IN SHAKESPEARE'S
POEMS, FACING "A LOVER'S COMPLAINT."

BRIGHT star, would I were stedfast as thou art—
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priest-like task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—
No—yet still stedfast, still unchangeable,
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.*

* Lord Houghton gives as "another reading" :—

"Half passionless, and so swoon on to death "



OTHO THE GREAT:
A TRAGEDY,
IN FIVE ACTS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

OTHO THE GREAT, *Emperor of Germany.*

LUDOLPH, *his Son.*

CONRAD, *Duke of Franconia.*

ALBERT, *a Knight, favoured by Otho.*

SIGIFRED, *an Officer, friend of Ludolph.*

THEODORE, } *Officers.*

GONFRED, }

ETHELBERT, *an Abbot.*

GERSA, *Prince of Hungary.*

An Hungarian Captain.

Physician.

Page.

Nobles, Knights, Attendants, and Soldiers.

ERMINIA, *Niece of Otho.*

AURANTHE, *Conrad's Sister.*

Ladies and Attendants.

SCENE. *The Castle of Friedburg, its vicinity, and the
Hungarian Camp.*

TIME. *One Day.*

OTHO THE GREAT.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Castle.*

Enter CONRAD.

Con. So, I am safe emerged from these broils !
Amid the wreck of thousands I am whole ;
For every crime I have a laurel-wreath,
For every lie a lordship. Nor yet has
My ship of fortune furl'd her silken sails,— 5
Let her glide on ! This danger'd neck is saved,
By dexterous policy, from the rebel's axe ;
And of my ducal palace not one stone
Is bruised by the Hungarian petards.
Toil hard, ye slaves, and from the miser-earth 10
Bring forth once more my bullion, treasured deep,
With all my jewell'd salvers, silver and gold,
And precious goblets that make rich the wine.
But why do I stand babbling to myself ?
Where is Auranthe ? I have news for her 15
Shall——

Enter AURANTHE.

Aur. Conrad ! what tidings ? Good, if I may guess
From your alert eyes and high-lifted brows.
What tidings of the battle ? Albert ? Ludolph ? Otho ?

Con. You guess aright. And, sister, slurring o'er
Our by-gone quarrels, I confess my heart 20
Is beating with a child's anxiety,
To make our golden fortune known to you.

Aur. So serious?

Con. Yes, so serious, that before
I utter even the shadow of a hint
Concerning what will make that sin-worn cheek 25
Blush joyous blood through every lineament,
You must make here a solemn vow to me.

Aur. I pr'ythee, Conrad, do not overact
The hypocrite—what vow would you impose?

Con. Trust me for once,—that you may be assured 30
'Tis not confiding to a broken reed,
A poor Court-bankrupt, outwitted and lost,
Revolve these facts in your acutest mood,
In such a mood as now you listen to me :—
A few days since, I was an open rebel 35
Against the Emperor, had suborn'd his son,
Drawn off his nobles to revolt, and shown
Contented fools causes for discontent
Fresh hatch'd in my ambition's eagle nest—
So thrived I as a rebel, and, behold ! 40
Now I am Otho's favourite, his dear friend,
His right hand, his brave Conrad !

Aur. I confess
You have intrigu'd with these unsteady times
To admiration ; but to be a favourite——

Con. I saw my moment. The Hungarians, 45
Collected silently in holes and corners,
Appear'd, a sudden host, in the open day.

I should have perish'd in our empire's wreck,
But, calling interest loyalty, swore faith
To most believing Otho; and so help'd 50
His blood-stain'd ensigns to the victory
In yesterday's hard fight, that it has turn'd
The edge of his sharp wrath to eager kindness.

Aur. So far yourself. But what is this to me
More than that I am glad? I gratulate you. 55

Con. Yes, sister, but it does regard you greatly,
Nearly, momentarily,—aye, painfully!
Make me this vow——

Aur. Concerning whom or what?

Con. Albert!

Aur. I would inquire somewhat of him :
You had a letter from me touching him? 60
No treason 'gainst his head in deed or word!
Surely you spared him at my earnest prayer?
Give me the letter—it should not exist!

Con. At one pernicious charge of the enemy,
I, for a moment-whiles, was prisoner ta'en 65
And rifled,—stuff! the horses' hoofs have minced it!

Aur. He is alive?

Con. He is! but here make oath
To alienate him from your scheming brain,
Divorce him from your solitary thoughts,
And cloud him in such utter banishment, 70
That when his person meets again your eye,
Your vision shall quite lose its memory,
And wander past him as through vacancy.

Aur. I'll not be perjured.

Con. No, nor great, nor mighty;

You would not wear a crown, or rule a kingdom. 75
To you it is indifferent.

Aur. What means this?

Con. You'll not be perjured! Go to Albert then,
That camp-mushroom—dishonour of our house.
Go, page his dusty heels upon a march,
Furbish his jingling baldrick while he sleeps, 80
And share his mouldy ration in a siege.
Yet stay,—perhaps a charm may call you back,
And make the widening circlets of your eyes
Sparkle with healthy fevers.—The Emperor
Hath given consent that you should marry
Ludolph! 85

Aur. Can it be, brother? For a golden crown
With a queen's awful lips I doubly thank you!
This is to wake in Paradise! Farewell
Thou clod of yesterday—'twas not myself!
Not till this moment did I ever feel 90
My spirit's faculties! I'll flatter you
For this, and be you ever proud of it;
Thou, Jove-like, struck'st thy forehead,
And from the teeming marrow of thy brain
I spring complete Minerva! But the prince— 95
His highness Ludolph—where is he?

Con. I know not:

When, lackeying my counsel at a beck,
The rebel lords, on bended knees, received
The Emperor's pardon, Ludolph kept aloof,
Sole, in a stiff, fool-hardy, sulky pride; 100
Yet, for all this, I never saw a father
In such a sickly longing for his son.

We shall soon see him, for the Emperor
He will be here this morning.

Aur. That I heard
Among the midnight rumours from the camp. 105

Con. You give up Albert to me?

Aur. Harm him not !
E'en for his highness Ludolph's sceptry hand,
I would not Albert suffer any wrong.

Con. Have I not laboured, plotted——?

Aur. See you spare him :
Nor be pathetic, my kind benefactor, 110
On all the many bounties of your hand,—
'Twas for yourself you laboured—not for me !
Do you not count, when I am queen, to take
Advantage of your chance discoveries
Of my poor secrets, and so hold a rod 115
Over my life?

Con. Let not this slave—this villain—
Be cause of feud between us. See ! he comes !
Look, woman, look, your Albert is quite safe !
In haste it seems. Now shall I be in the way,
And wish'd with silent curses in my grave, 120
Or side by side with 'whelmed mariners.

Enter ALBERT.

Alb. Fair on your graces fall this early morrow !
So it is like to do, without my prayers,
For your right noble names, like favorite tunes,
Have fallen full frequent from our Emperor's lips, 125
High commented with smiles.

Aur. Noble Albert !

Con. (*aside*).

Noble !

Aur. Such salutation argues a glad heart
In our prosperity. We thank you, sir.

Alb. Lady ! O, would to Heaven your poor servant
Could do you better service than mere words ! 130
But I have other greeting than mine own,
From no less man than Otho, who has sent
This ring as pledge of dearest amity ;
'Tis chosen I hear from Hymen's jewel'ry,
And you will prize it, lady, I doubt not, 135
Beyond all pleasures past, and all to come.
To you great duke——

Con. To me ! What of me, ha ?

Alb. What pleased your grace to say ?

Con. Your message, sir !

Alb. You mean not this to me ?

Con. Sister, this way ; 139

For there shall be no "gentle Alberts" now, [*Aside*.
No "sweet Auranthes !"]

[*Exeunt* CONRAD and AURANTHE.

Alb. (*solus*). The duke is out of temper ; if he
knows

More than a brother of a sister ought,
I should not quarrel with his peevishness.
Auranthe—Heaven preserve her always fair !— 145
Is in the heady, proud, ambitious vein ;
I bicker not with her,—bid her farewell !
She has taken flight from me, then let her soar,—
He is a fool who stands at pining gaze !
But for poor Ludolph, he is food for sorrow : 150
No levelling bluster of my licensed thoughts,

No military swagger of my mind,
Can smother from myself the wrong I've done him,—
Without design, indeed,—yet it is so,—
And opiate for the conscience have I none !

155

[Exit.

SCENE II.—*The Court-yard of the Castle.*

Martial Music. Enter, from the outer gate, OTHO, Nobles, Knights, and Attendants. The Soldiers halt at the gate, with banners in sight.

Otho. Where is my noble herald ?

Enter CONRAD, from the Castle, attended by two Knights and Servants. ALBERT following.

Well, hast told

Auranthe our intent imperial ?
Lest our rent banners, too o' the sudden shown,
Should fright her silken casements, and dismay
Her household to our lack of entertainment.
A victory !

Con. God save illustrious Otho !

Otho. Aye, Conrad, it will pluck out all grey hairs ;
It is the best physician for the spleen ;
The courtliest inviter to a feast ;
The subtlest excuser of small faults ;
And a nice judge in the age and smack of wine.

10

Enter, from the Castle, AURANTHE, followed by Pages holding up her robes, and a train of Women. She kneels.

Hail my sweet hostess ! I do thank the stars,

Or my good soldiers, or their ladies' eyes,
That, after such a merry battle fought,
I can, all safe in body and in soul, 15
Kiss your fair hand and lady fortune's too.
My ring ! now, on my life, it doth rejoice
These lips to feel 't on this soft ivory !
Keep it, my brightest daughter ; it may prove
The little prologue to a line of kings. 20
I strove against thee and my hot-blood son,
Dull blockhead that I was to be so blind,
But now my sight is clear ; forgive me, lady.

Aur. My lord, I was a vassal to your frown,
And now your favour makes me but more humble ; 25
In wintry winds the simple snow is safe,
But fadeth at the greeting of the sun :
Unto thine anger I might well have spoken,
Taking on me a woman's privilege,
But this so sudden kindness makes me dumb. 30

Otho. What need of this ? Enough, if you will be
A potent tutoress to my wayward boy,
And teach him, what it seems his nurse could not,
To say, for once, I thank you. Sigifred !

Alb. He has not yet returned, my gracious liege. 35

Otho. What then ! No tidings of my friendly
Arab ?

Con. None, mighty Otho.

[*To one of his Knights, who goes out.*
Send forth instantly

An hundred horsemen from my honoured gates,
To scour the plains and search the cottages.
Cry a reward, to him who shall first bring 40

News of that vanished Arabian,
A full-heaped helmet of the purest gold.

Otho. More thanks, good Conrad; for, except my son's,

There is no face I rather would behold
Than that same quick-eyed pagan's. By the saints, 45
This coming night of banquets must not light
Her dazzling torches ; nor the music breathe
Smooth, without clashing cymbal, tones of peace
And in-door melodies ; nor the ruddy wine
Ebb spouting to the lees ; if I pledge not, 50
In my first cup, that Arab !

Alb. Mighty Monarch,

I wonder not this stranger's victor-deeds
So hang upon your spirit. Twice in the fight
It was my chance to meet his olive brow,
Triumphant in the enemy's shatter'd rhomb;
And, to say truth, in any Christian arm
I never saw such prowess.

Otho. Did you ever?

O, 'tis a noble boy !—tut !—what do I say ?
I mean a triple Saladin, whose eyes,
When in the glorious scuffle they met mine,
Seem'd to say—“ Sleep, old man, in safety sleep ;
I am the victory ! ”

Con. Pity he's not here.

Otho. And my son too, pity he is not here.
Lady Aurantke, I would not make you blush,
But can you give a guess where Ludolph is?
Know you not of him?

Aur. Indeed, my liege, no secret——

Otho. Nay, nay, without more words, dost know of him?

Aur. I would I were so over-fortunate,
Both for his sake and mine, and to make glad
A father's ears with tidings of his son. 70

Otho. I see 'tis like to be a tedious day.
Were Theodore and Gonfred and the rest
Sent forth with my commands?

Alb. Aye, my lord.

Otho. And no news! No news! 'Faith! 'tis very
strange
He thus avoids us. Lady, is 't not strange? 75
Will he be truant to you too? It is a shame.

Con. Wil't please your highness enter, and accept
The unworthy welcome of your servant's house?
Leaving your cares to one whose diligence
May in few hours make pleasures of them all. 80

Otho. Not so tedious, Conrad. No, no, no,—
I must see Ludolph or the—What's that shout?

Voices without.

Huzza! huzza! Long live the Emperor!

Other Voices.

Fall back! Away there!

Otho. Say, what noise is that?

[ALBERT *advancing from the back of the
Stage, whither he had hastened on hear-
ing the cheers of the soldiery.*

Alb. It is young Gersa, the Hungarian prince, 85
Pick'd like a red stag from the fallow herd
Of prisoners. Poor prince, forlorn he steps,

Slow, and demure, and proud in his despair.
If I may judge by his so tragic bearing,
His eye not downcast, and his folded arm,
He doth this moment wish himself asleep
Among his fallen captains on yon plains.

Enter GERSA, in chains, and guarded.

Otho. Well said, Sir Albert.

Ger. Not a word of greeting,

No welcome to a princely visitor,
Most mighty Otho? Will not my great host
Vouchsafe a syllable, before he bids
His gentlemen conduct me with all care
To some securest lodging—cold perhaps!

Otho. What mood is this? Hath fortune touch'd
thy brain?

Ger. O kings and princes of this fev'rous world,
What abject things, what mockeries must ye be,
What nerveless minions of safe palaces!
When here, a monarch, whose proud foot is used
To fallen princes' necks, as to his stirrup,
Must needs exclaim that I am mad forsooth,
Because I cannot flatter with bent knees
My conqueror!

Otho. Gersa, I think you wrong me :
think I have a better fame abroad.

Ger. I prythee mock me not with gentle speech,
But, as a favour, bid me from thy presence ;
Let me no longer be the wondering food
Of all these eyes ; prythee command me hence!

Otho. Do not mistake me, Gersa. That you may not,

Come, fair Auranthe, try if your soft hands
Can manage those hard rivets, to set free 115
So brave a prince and soldier.

Aur. (sets him free). Welcome task !

Ger. I am wound up in deep astonishment !
Thank you, fair lady. Otho ! emperor !
You rob me of myself ; my dignity
Is now your infant ; I am a weak child. 120

Otho. Give me your hand, and let this kindly grasp
Live in our memories.

Ger. In mine it will.

I blush to think of my unchasten'd tongue ;
But I was haunted by the monstrous ghost
Of all our slain battalions. Sire, reflect, 125
And pardon you will grant, that, at this hour,
The bruised remnants of our stricken camp
Are huddling undistinguished, my dear friends,
With common thousands, into shallow graves.

Otho. Enough, most noble Gersa. You are free 130
To cheer the brave remainder of your host
By your own healing presence, and that too,
Not as their leader merely, but their king ;
For, as I hear, the wily enemy,
Who eas'd the crownet from your infant brows, 135
Bloody Taraxa, is among the dead.

Ger. Then I retire, so generous Otho please,
Bearing with me a weight of benefits
Too heavy to be borne.

Otho. It is not so ;
Still understand me, King of Hungary, 140
Nor judge my open purposes awry.

Though I did hold you high in my esteem
For your self's sake, I do not personate
The stage-play emperor to entrap applause,
To set the silly sort o' the world agape, 145
And make the politic smile ; no, I have heard
How in the Council you condemn'd this war,
Urging the perfidy of broken faith,—
For that I am your friend.

Ger. If ever, sire,
You are my enemy, I dare here swear 150
'Twill not be Gersa's fault. Otho, farewell !

Otho. Will you return, Prince, to our banqueting ?

Ger. As to my father's board I will return.

Otho. Conrad, with all due ceremony, give
The prince a regal escort to his camp ; 155
Albert, go thou and bear him company.
Gersa, farewell !

Ger. All happiness attend you !

Otho. Return with what good speed you may ; for
soon

We must consult upon our terms of peace.

[Exeunt GERSA and ALBERT with others.]

And thus a marble column do I build 160
To prop my empire's dome. Conrad, in thee
I have another steadfast one, to uphold
The portals of my state ; and, for my own
Pre-eminence and safety, I will strive
To keep thy strength upon its pedestal. 165
For, without thee, this day I might have been
A show-monster about the streets of Prague,
In chains, as just now stood that noble prince :

And then to me no mercy had been shown,
For when the conquer'd lion is once dungeoned, 170
Who lets him forth again, or dares to give
An old lion sugar-cakes of mild reprieve?
Not to thine ear alone I make confession,
But to all here, as, by experience,
I know how the great basement of all power 175
Is frankness, and a true tongue to the world ;
And how intriguing secrecy is proof
Of fear and weakness, and a hollow state.
Conrad, I owe thee much.

Con. To kiss that hand,
My emperor, is ample recompense, 180
For a mere act of duty.

Otho. Thou art wrong ;
For what can any man on earth do more ?
We will make trial of your house's welcome,
My bright Auranthe !

Con. How is Friedburg honoured !

Enter ETHELBERT and six Monks.

Eth. The benison of heaven on your head, 185
Imperial Otho !

Otho. Who stays me ? Speak ! Quick !

Eth. Pause but one moment, mighty conqueror !
Upon the threshold of this house of joy.

Otho. Pray, do not prose, good Ethelbert, but speak
What is your purpose. 190

Eth. The restoration of some captive maids,
Devoted to Heaven's pious ministries,
Who, driven forth from their religious cells,

And kept in thraldom by our enemy,
When late this province was a lawless spoil, 195
Still weep amid the wild Hungarian camp,
Though hemm'd around by thy victorious arms.

Otho. Demand the holy sisterhood in our name
From Gersa's tents. Farewell, old Ethelbert.

Eth. The saints will bless you for this pious care. 200

Otho. Daughter, your hand; Ludolph's would fit
it best.

Con. Ho! let the music sound!

[*Music.* ETHELBERT raises his hands, as in
benediction of OTHO. *Exeunt severally.*
The scene closes on them.

SCENE III.—*The Country, with the Castle in the
distance.*

Enter LUDOLPH and SIGIFRED.

Lud. You have my secret; let it not be breath'd.

Sig. Still give me leave to wonder that the Prince
Ludolph and the swift Arab are the same;
Still to rejoice that 'twas a German arm
Death doing in a turban'd masquerade. 5

Lud. The Emperor must not know it, Sigifred.

Sig. I prythee, why? What happier hour of time
Could thy pleased star point down upon from heaven
With silver index, bidding thee make peace?

Lud. Still it must not be known, good Sigifred; 10
The star may point oblique.

Sig. If Otho knew

His son to be that unknown Mussulman
After whose spurring heels he sent me forth,
With one of his well-pleas'd Olympian oaths,
The charters of man's greatness, at this hour 15
He would be watching round the castle walls,
And, like an anxious warder, strain his sight
For the first glimpse of such a son return'd—
Ludolph, that blast of the Hungarians,
That Saracenic meteor of the fight, 20
That silent fury, whose fell scymitar
Kept danger all aloof from Otho's head,
And left him space for wonder.

Lud. Say no more.

Not as a swordsman would I pardon claim,
But as a son. The bronzed centurion, 25
Long toil'd in foreign wars, and whose high deeds
Are shaded in a forest of tall spears,
Known only to his troop, hath greater plea
Of favour with my sire than I can have.

Sig. My lord, forgive me that I cannot see 30
How this proud temper with clear reason squares.
What made you then, with such an anxious love,
Hover around that life, whose bitter days
You vext with bad revolt? Was 't opium,
Or the mad-fumed wine? Nay, do not frown, 35
I rather would grieve with you than upbraid.

Lud. I do believe you. No, 'twas not to make
A father his son's debtor, or to heal
His deep heart-sickness for a rebel child.
'Twas done in memory of my boyish days, 40
Poor cancel for his kindness to my youth,

For all his calming of my childish griefs,
And all his smiles upon my merriment.
No, not a thousand foughten fields could sponge
Those days paternal from my memory, 43
Though now upon my head he heaps disgrace.

Sig. My Prince, you think too harshly——

Lud. Can I so?

Hath he not gall'd my spirit to the quick?
And with a sullen rigour obstinate
Pour'd out a phial of wrath upon my faults? 50
Hunted me as the Tartar does the boar,
Driven me to the very edge o' the world,
And almost put a price upon my head?

Sig. Remember how he spared the rebel lords.

Lud. Yes, yes, I know he hath a noble nature 55
That cannot trample on the fallen. But his
Is not the only proud heart in his realm.
He hath wrong'd me, and I have done him wrong;
He hath loved me, and I have shown him kind-
ness;

We should be almost equal.

Sig. Yet, for all this, 60
I would you had appear'd among those lords,
And ta'en his favour.

Lud. Ha! till now I thought
My friend had held poor Ludolph's honour dear.
What! would you have me sue before his throne
And kiss the courtier's missal, its silk steps? 65
Or hug the golden housings of his steed,
Amid a camp, whose steeled swarms I dared
But yesterday? And, at the trumpet sound,

Bow like some unknown mercenary's flag,
And lick the soiled grass? No, no, my friend, 70
I would not, I, be pardon'd in the heap,
And bless indemnity with all that scum,—
Those men I mean, who on my shoulders propp'd
Their weak rebellion, winning me with lies,
And pitying forsooth my many wrongs; 75
Poor self-deceived wretches, who must think
Each one himself a king in embryo,
Because some dozen vassals cry'd—my lord!
Cowards, who never knew their little hearts,
Till flurried danger held the mirror up, 80
And then they own'd themselves without a blush,
Curling, like spaniels, round my father's feet.
Such things deserted me and are forgiven,
While I, least guilty, am an outcast still,
And will be, for I love such fair disgrace. 85

Sig. I know the clear truth; so would Otho
see,

For he is just and noble. Fain would I
Be pleader for you——

Lud. He'll hear none of it;
You know his temper, hot, proud, obstinate;
Endanger not yourself so uselessly. 90
I will encounter his thwart spleen myself,
To-day, at the Duke Conrad's, where he keeps
His crowded state after the victory.
There will I be, a most unwelcome guest,
And parley with him, as a son should do, 95
Who doubly loathes a father's tyranny;
Tell him how feeble is that tyranny;

How the relationship of father and son
Is no more valid than a silken leash
Where lions tug adverse, if love grow not 100
From interchanged love through many years.
Aye, and those turreted Franconian walls,
Like to a jealous casket, hold my pearl—
My fair Auranthe ! Yes, I will be there.

Sig. Be not so rash ; wait till his wrath shall
pass, 105

Until his royal spirit softly ebbs
Self-influenced ; then, in his morning dreams
He will forgive thee, and awake in grief
To have not thy good morrow.

Lud. Yes, to-day
I must be there, while her young pulses beat 110
Among the new-plumed minions of the war.
Have you seen her of late ? No ? Auranthe,
Franconia's fair sister, 'tis I mean.
She should be paler for my troublous days—
And there it is—my father's iron lips 115
Have sworn divorcement 'twixt me and my right.

Sig. (aside). Auranthe ! I had hoped this whim had
pass'd.

Lud. And, Sigifred, with all his love of justice,
When will he take that grandchild in his arms,
That, by my love I swear, shall soon be his ? 120
This reconciliation is impossible,
For see—but who are these ?

Sig. They are messengers
From our great emperor ; to you, I doubt not,
For couriers are abroad to seek you out.

Enter THEODORE and GONFRED.

Theo. Seeing so many vigilant eyes explore 125
The province to invite your highness back
To your high dignities, we are too happy.

Gon. We have no eloquence to colour justly
The emperor's anxious wishes.

Lud.

Go. I follow you.

[Exeunt THEODORE and GONFRED.]

I play the prude : it is but venturing— 130
Why should he be so earnest? Come, my friend,
Let us to Friedburg castle.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An Ante-chamber in the Castle.*

Enter LUDOLPH and SIGIFRED.

Lud. No more advices, no more cautioning ;
I leave it all to fate—to anything !
I cannot square my conduct to time, place,
Or circumstance ; to me 'tis all a mist !

Sig. I say no more.

Lud. 5
It seems I am to wait
Here in the ante-room ;—that may be a trifle.
You see now how I dance attendance here,
Without that tyrant temper, you so blame,
Snapping the rein. You have medicin'd me
With good advices ; and I here remain, 10
In this most honourable ante-room,
Your patient scholar.

Sig. Do not wrong me, Prince.
By Heavens, I'd rather kiss Duke Conrad's slipper,
When in the morning he doth yawn with pride,
Than see you humbled but a half-degree ! 15
Truth is, the Emperor would fain dismiss
The nobles ere he sees you.

Enter GONFRED, from the Council-room.

Lud. Well, sir ! what ?

Gon. Great honour to the Prince ! The Emperor,
Hearing that his brave son had re-appeared,
Instant dismiss'd the Council from his sight, 20
As Jove fans off the clouds. Even now they pass.
[*Exit.*

Enter the Nobles from the Council-room. They cross the stage, bowing with respect to LUDOLPH, he frowning on them. CONRAD follows. Exeunt Nobles.

Lud. Not the discoloured poisons of a fen,
Which he who breathes feels warning of his death,
Could taste so nauseous to the bodily sense,
As these prodigious sycophants disgust 25
The soul's fine palate.

Con. Princely Ludolph, hail !
Welcome, thou younger sceptre to the realm !
Strength to thy virgin crownlet's golden buds,
That they, against the winter of thy sire,
May burst, and swell, and flourish round thy brows, 30
Maturing to a weighty diadem !
Yet be that hour far off ; and may he live,

Who waits for thee, as the chapp'd earth for rain.
Set my life's star ! I have lived long enough,
Since under my glad roof, propitiously, 35
Father and son each other re-possess.

Lud. Fine wording, Duke ! but words could never
yet

Forestall the fates ; have you not learnt that yet ?
Let me look well : your features are the same ;
Your gait the same ; your hair of the same shade ; 40
As one I knew some passed weeks ago,
Who sung far different notes into mine ears.
I have mine own particular comments on 't ;
You have your own, perhaps.

Con. My gracious Prince,
All men may err. In truth I was deceived 45
In your great father's nature, as you were.
Had I known that of him I have since known,
And what you soon will learn, I would have turn'd
My sword to my own throat, rather than held
Its threatening edge against a good King's quiet : 50
Or with one word fever'd you, gentle Prince,
Who seem'd to me, as rugged times then went,
Indeed too much oppress'd. May I be bold
To tell the Emperor you will haste to him ?

Lud. Your Dukedom's privilege will grant so
much. 55

[*Exit* CONRAD.]

He's very close to Otho, a tight leech !
Your hand—I go. Ha ! here the thunder comes
Sullen against the wind ! If in two angry brows
My safety lies, then Sigifred, I'm safe.

Enter OTHO and CONRAD.

Otho. Will you make Titan play the lackey-page 60
To chattering pigmies? I would have you know
That such neglect of our high Majesty
Annuls all feel of kindred. What is son,—
Or friend,—or brother,—or all ties of blood,—
When the whole kingdom, centred in ourself, 65
Is rudely slighted? Who am I to wait?
By Peter's chair! I have upon my tongue
A word to fright the proudest spirit here!—
Death!—and slow tortures to the hardy fool,
Who dares take such large charter from our smiles! 70
Conrad, we would be private. *Sigifred!*
Off! And none pass this way on pain of death!

[Exeunt CONRAD and SIGIFRED.]

Lud. This was but half expected, my good sire,
Yet I am grieved at it, to the full height,
As though my hopes of favour had been whole. 75

Otho. How you indulge yourself! What can you
hope for?

Lud. Nothing, my liege; I have to hope for nothing.
I come to greet you as a loving son,
And then depart, if I may be so free,
Seeing that blood of yours in my warm veins 80
Has not yet mitigated into milk.

Otho. What would you, sir?

Lud. A lenient banishment;
So please you let me unmolested pass
This Conrad's gates, to the wide air again.
I want no more. A rebel wants no more. 85

Otho. And shall I let a rebel loose again
To muster kites and eagles 'gainst my head?
No, obstinate boy, you shall be kept caged up,
Served with harsh food, with scum for Sunday-drink.

Lud. Indeed!

Otho. And chains too heavy for your life : 90
I'll choose a gaoler, whose swart monstrous face
Shall be a hell to look upon, and she——

Lud.

Ha!

Otho. Shall be your fair Auranthe.

Lud.

Amaze! Amaze!

Otho. To-day you marry her.

Lud.

This is a sharp jest!

Otho. No. None at all. When have I said a lie? 95

Lud. If I sleep not, I am a waking wretch.

Otho. Not a word more. Let me embrace my child.

Lud. I dare not. 'Twould pollute so good a father!
O heavy crime! that your son's blinded eyes
Could not see all his parent's love aright, 100
As now I see it. Be not kind to me—
Punish me not with favour.

Otho. Are you sure,
Ludolph, you have no saving plea in store?

Lud. My father, none!

Otho.

Then you astonish me.

Lud. No, I have no plea. Disobedience, 105
Rebellion, obstinacy, blasphemy,
Are all my counsellors. If they can make
My crooked deeds show good and plausible,
Then grant me loving pardon, but not else,
Good Gods! not else, in any way, my liege! 110

Otho. You are a most perplexing, noble boy.

Lud. You not less a perplexing noble father.

Otho. Well, you shall have free passport through
the gates.

Farewell !

Lud. Farewell ! and by these tears believe,
And still remember, I repent in pain 115
All my misdeeds !

Otho. Ludolph, I will ! I will !
But, Ludolph, ere you go, I would enquire
If you, in all your wandering, ever met
A certain Arab haunting in these parts.

Lud. No, my good lord, I cannot say I did. 120

Otho. Make not your father blind before his time ;
Nor let these arms paternal hunger more
For an embrace, to dull the appetite
Of my great love for thee, my supreme child !
Come close, and let me breathe into thine ear. 125
I knew you through disguise. You are the Arab !
You can't deny it. [*Embracing him.*]

Lud. Happiest of days !

Otho. We'll make it so.

Lud. 'Steal of one fatted calf
Ten hecatombs shall bellow out their last,
Smote 'twixt the horns by the death-stunning mace 130
Of Mars, and all the soldiery shall feast
Nobly as Nimrod's masons, when the towers
Of Nineveh new kiss'd the parted clouds !

Otho. Large as a God speak out, where all is thine.

Lud. Aye, father, but the fire in my sad breast 135
Is quench'd with inward tears ! I must rejoice

For you, whose wings so shadow over me
In tender victory, but for myself
I still must mourn. The fair Auranthe mine !
Too great a boon ! I prythee let me ask 140
What more than I know of could so have changed
Your purpose touching her ?

Otho. At a word, this :

In no deed did you give me more offence
Than your rejection of Erminia.
To my appalling, I saw too good proof 145
Of your keen-eyed suspicion,—she is naught !

Lud. You are convinc'd ?

Otho. Aye, spite her sweet looks.
O, that my brother's daughter should so fall !
Her fame has pass'd into the grosser lips
Of soldiers in their cups.

Lud. 'Tis very sad. 150

Otho. No more of her. Auranthe—Ludolph,
come !

This marriage be the bond of endless peace !
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The Entrance of GERSA'S Tent in
the Hungarian Camp.*

Enter ERMINIA.

Erm. Where ! where ! where shall I find a mes-
senger ?

A trusty soul—a good man in the camp ?
Shall I go myself ? Monstrous wickedness !
O cursed Conrad ! devilish Auranthe !

Here is proof palpable as the bright sun ! 5
O for a voice to reach the Emperor's ears !

[Shouts in the Camp.]

Enter an HUNGARIAN CAPTAIN.

Cap. Fair prisoner, you hear these joyous shouts ?
The King—aye, now our King,—but still your slave,
Young Gersa, from a short captivity
Has just return'd. He bids me say, bright dame, 10
That even the homage of his ranged chiefs
Cures not his keen impatience to behold
Such beauty once again. What ails you, lady ?

Erm. Say, is not that a German, yonder ? There !

Cap. Methinks by his stout bearing he should be— 15
Yes—it is Albert ; a brave German knight,
And much in the Emperor's favour.

Erm. I would fain
Enquire of friends and kinsfolk ; how they fared
In these rough times. Brave soldier, as you pass
To royal Gersa with my humble thanks, 20
Will you send yonder knight to me ?

Cap. I will. *[Exit.]*

Erm. Yes, he was ever known to be a man
Frank, open, generous ; Albert I may trust.
O proof ! proof ! proof ! Albert's an honest man ;
Not Ethelbert the monk, if he were here, 25
Would I hold more trustworthy. Now !

Enter ALBERT.

Alb. Good Gods !
Lady Erminia ! are you prisoner
In this beleaguer'd camp ? Or are you here

Of your own will? You pleased to send for me.

By Venus, 'tis a pity I knew not

30

Your plight before, and, by her son, I swear

To do you every service you can ask.

What would the fairest——?

Erm.

Albert, will you swear?

Alb. I have. Well?

Erm.

Albert, you have fame to lose.

If men, in court and camp, lie not outright,

35

You should be, from a thousand, chosen forth

To do an honest deed. Shall I confide——?

Alb. Aye, anything to me, fair creature. Do;

Dictate my task. Sweet woman,—

Erm.

Truce with that.

You understand me not; and, in your speech,

40

I see how far the slander is abroad.

Without proof could you think me innocent?

Alb. Lady, I should rejoice to know you so.

Erm. If you have any pity for a maid,

Suffering a daily death from evil tongues;

45

Any compassion for that Emperor's niece,

Who, for your bright sword and clear honesty,

Lifted you from the crowd of common men

Into the lap of honour;—save me, knight!

Alb. How? Make it clear; if it be possible,

50

I, by the banner of Saint Maurice, swear

To right you.

Erm.

Possible!—Easy. O my heart!

This letter's not so soil'd but you may read it;—

Possible! There—that letter! Read—read it.

[Gives him a letter.

Alb. (reading). "TO THE DUKE CONRAD.— 55
Forget the threat you made at parting, and I will
forget to send the Emperor letters and papers of
yours I have become possessed of. His life is
no trifle to me; his death you shall find none
to yourself." (*Speaks to himself.*) 'Tis me—my 60
life that's pleaded for? (*Reads.*) "He, for his
own sake, will be dumb as the grave. Erminia
has my shame fix'd upon her, sure as a wen. We
are safe. AURANTHE."

A she-devil! A dragon! I her imp!
Fire of Hell! Auranthe—lewd demon! 65
Where got you this? Where? When?

Erm. I found it in the tent, among some spoils
Which, being noble, fell to Gersa's lot.
Come in, and see. [*They go in and return.*]

Alb. Villainy! Villainy!
Conrad's sword, his corslet, and his helm, 70
And his letter. Caitiff, he shall feel——

Erm. I see you are thunderstruck. Haste, haste
away!

Alb. O I am tortured by this villainy.

Erm. You needs must be. Carry it swift to Otho;
Tell him, moreover, I am prisoner 75
Here in this camp, where all the sisterhood,
Forced from their quiet cells, are parcell'd out
For slaves among these Huns. Away! Away!

Alb. I am gone.

Erm. Swift be your steed! Within this hour
The Emperor will see it.

Alb. Ere I sleep : 80
That I can swear. [*Hurries out.*
Ger. (*without*). Brave captains ! thanks. Enough
Of loyal homage now !

Enter GERSA.

Erm. Hail, royal Hun !
Ger. What means this, fair one ? Why in such
alarm ?
Who was it hurried by me so distract ?
It seem'd you were in deep discourse together ; 85
Your doctrine has not been so harsh to him
As to my poor deserts. Come, come, be plain.
I am no jealous fool to kill you both,
Or, for such trifles, rob th' adorned world
Of such a beauteous vestal.

Erm. I grieve, my Lord, 90
To hear you condescend to ribald-phrase.

Ger. This is too much ! Hearken, my lady pure !

Erm. Silence ! and hear the magic of a name—
Erminia ! I am she,—the Emperor's niece !
Praised be the Heavens, I now dare own myself ! 95

Ger. Erminia ! Indeed ! I've heard of her.
Prythee, fair lady, what chance brought you here ?

Erm. Ask your own soldiers.

Ger. And you dare own your name.
For loveliness you may—and for the rest
My vein is not censorious.

Erm. Alas ! poor me ! 100
'Tis false indeed.

Ger. Indeed you are too fair :

The swan, soft leaning on her fledgy breast,
When to the stream she launches, looks not back
With such a tender grace ; nor are her wings
So white as your soul is, if that but be 105
Twin picture to your face. Erminia !
To-day, for the first day, I am a king,
Yet would I give my unworn crown away
To know you spotless.

Erm. Trust me one day more,
Generously, without more certain guarantee, 110
Than this poor face you deign to praise so much ;
After that, say and do whate'er you please.
If I have any knowledge of you, sir,
I think, nay I am sure, you will grieve much
To hear my story. O be gentle to me, 115
For I am sick and faint with many wrongs,
Tired out, and weary-worn with contumelies.

Ger. Poor lady !

Enter ETHELBERT.

Erm. Gentle Prince, 'tis false indeed.
Good morrow, holy father ! I have had
Your prayers, though I look'd for you in vain. 120

Eth. Blessings upon you, daughter ! Sure you look
Too cheerful for these foul pernicious days.
Young man, you heard this virgin say 'twas false,—
'Tis false, I say. What ! can you not employ
Your temper elsewhere, 'mong those burly tents, 125
But you must taunt this dove, for she hath lost
The Eagle Otho to beat off assault ?
Fie ! fie ! But I will be her guard myself ;

I' the Emperor's name. I here demand
Herself, and all her sisterhood. She false ! 130

Ger. Peace ! peace, old man ! I cannot think she is.

Eth. Whom I have known from her first infancy,
Baptized her in the bosom of the Church,
Watch'd her, as anxious husbandmen the grain,
From the first shoot till the unripe mid-May, 135
Then to the tender ear of her June days,
Which, lifting sweet abroad its timid green,
Is blighted by the touch of calumny ;
You cannot credit such a monstrous tale.

Ger. I cannot. Take her. Fair Erminia, 140
I follow you to Friedburg,—is't not so ?

Erm. Aye, so we purpose.

Eth. Daughter, do you so ?
How's this ? I marvel ! Yet you look not mad.

Erm. I have good news to tell you, Ethelbert.

Ger. Ho ! ho, there ! Guards ! 145
Your blessing, father ! Sweet Erminia.
Believe me, I am well nigh sure——

Erm. Farewell !
Short time will show. [*Enter Chiefs.*

Yes, father Ethelbert,
I have news precious as we pass along.

Eth. Dear daughter, you shall guide me.

Erm. To no ill. 150

Ger. Command an escort to the Friedburg lines,
[*Exeunt Chiefs.*

Pray let me lead. Fair lady, forget not
Gersa, how he believed you innocent.
I follow you to Friedburg with all speed. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Country.**Enter* ALBERT.

Alb. O that the earth were empty, as when Cain
Had no perplexity to hide his head !
Or that the sword of some brave enemy
Had put a sudden stop to my hot breath,
And hurl'd me down the illimitable gulph 5
Of times past, unremember'd ! Better so
Than thus fast-limed in a cursed snare,
The white limbs of a wanton. This the end
Of an aspiring life ! My boyhood past
In feud with wolves and bears, when no eye saw 10
The solitary warfare, fought for love
Of honour 'mid the growling wilderness.
My sturdier youth, maturing to the sword,
Won by the syren-trumpets, and the ring
Of shields upon the pavement, when bright-mail'd 15
Henry the Fowler pass'd the streets of Prague.
Was't to this end I louted and became
The menial of Mars, and held a spear
Sway'd by command, as corn is by the wind ?
Is it for this, I now am lifted up 20
By Europe's throned Emperor, to see
My honour be my executioner,—
My love of fame, my prided honesty
Put to the torture for confessional ?
Then the damn'd crime of blurting to the world 25

A woman's secret !—though a fiend she be,
Too tender of my ignominious life ;
But then to wrong the generous Emperor
In such a searching point, were to give up
My soul for foot-ball at Hell's holiday ! 30
I must confess,—and cut my throat,—to-day ?
To-morrow ? Ho ! some wine !

Enter SIGIFRED.

Sig. A fine humour——

Alb. Who goes there ? Count Sigifred ? Ha ! Ha !

Sig. What, man, do you mistake the hollow sky
For a throng'd tavern,—and these stubbed trees 35
For old serge hangings,—me, your humble friend,
For a poor waiter ? Why, man, how you stare !
What gipsies have you been carousing with ?
No, no more wine ; methinks you've had enough.

Alb. You may well laugh and banter. What a fool 40
An injury may make of a staid man !
You shall know all anon.

Sig. Some tavern brawl ?

Alb. 'Twas with some people out of common reach ;
Revenge is difficult.

Sig. I am your friend ;
We meet again to-day, and can confer 45
Upon it. For the present I'm in haste.

Alb. Whither ?

Sig. To fetch King Gersa to the feast.
The Emperor on this marriage is so hot,
Pray Heaven it end not in apoplexy !
The very porters, as I pass'd the doors, 50

Heard his loud laugh, and answer'd in full choir.
I marvel, Albert, you delay so long
From these bright revelries ; go, show yourself,
You may be made a duke.

Alb. Aye, very like :

Pray, what day has his Highness fix'd upon? 55

Sig. For what?

Alb. The marriage. What else can I mean?

Sig. To-day. O, I forgot, you could not know ;
The news is scarce a minute old with me.

Alb. Married to-day ! To-day ! You did not say so ?

Sig. Now, while I speak to you, their comely heads 60
Are bowed before the mitre.

Alb. O ! monstrous !

Sig. What is this ?

Alb. Nothing, Sigifred. Farewell !
We'll meet upon our subject. Farewell, count !

[*Exit.*

Sig. To this clear-headed Albert ? He brain-
turn'd ! 64

'Tis as portentous as a meteor. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in the Castle.*

*Enter, as from the Marriage, OTHO, LUDOLPH,
AURANTHE, CONRAD, Nobles, Knights, Ladies,
&c. Music.*

Otho. Now, Ludolph ! Now, Auranthe ! Daughter
fair !

What can I find to grace your nuptial day
More than my love, and these wide realms in fee ?

Lud. I have too much.

Aur. And I, my liege, by far.

Lud. Auranthe ! I have ! O, my bride, my
love ! 5

Not all the gaze upon us can restrain
My eyes, too long poor exiles from thy face,
From adoration, and my foolish tongue
From uttering soft responses to the love
I see in thy mute beauty beaming forth ! 10
Fair creature, bless me with a single word !
All mine !

Aur. Spare, spare me, my Lord ; I swoon else.

Lud. Soft beauty ! by to-morrow I should die,
Wert thou not mine. [*They talk apart.*

1st Lady. How deep she has bewitch'd him !

1st Knight. Ask you for her recipe for love
philtres. 15

2nd Lady. They hold the Emperor in admiration.

Otho. If ever king was happy, that am I !

What are the cities 'yond the Alps to me,
The provinces about the Danube's mouth,
The promise of fair sail beyond the Rhone ; 20
Or routing out of Hyperborean hordes,
To these fair children, stars of a new age ?
Unless perchance I might rejoice to win
This little ball of earth, and chuck it them
To play with !

Aur. Nay, my Lord, I do not know. 25

Lud. Let me not famish.

Otho (to Conrad). Good Franconia,
You heard what oath I sware, as the sun rose,

That unless Heaven would send me back my son,
My Arab,—no soft music should enrich
The cool wine, kiss'd off with a soldier's smack ; 30
Now all my empire, barter'd for one feast,
Seems poverty.

Con. Upon the neighbour-plain
The heralds have prepared a royal lists ;
Your knights, found war-proof in the bloody field,
Speed to the game.

Otho. Well, Ludolph, what say you ? 35

Lud. My lord !

Otho. A tourney ?

Con. Or, if't please you best——

Lud. I want no more !

1st Lady. He soars !

2nd Lady. Past all reason.

Lud. Though heaven's choir
Should in a vast circumference descend
And sing for my delight, I'd stop my ears ! 40
Though bright Apollo's car stood burning here,
And he put out an arm to bid me mount,
His touch an immortality, not I !
This earth, this palace, this room, Auranthe !

Otho. This is a little painful ; just too much. 45
Conrad, if he flames longer in this wise,
I shall believe in wizard-woven loves
And old romances ; but I'll break the spell.
Ludolph !

Con. He'll be calm, anon.

Lud. You call'd ?

Yes, yes, yes, I offend. You must forgive me ; 50

Not being quite recover'd from the stun
Of your large bounties. A tourney, is it not?

[*A senet heard faintly.*]

Con. The trumpets reach us.

Eth. (without). On your peril, sirs,
Detain us!

1st Voice (without). Let not the abbot pass.

2nd Voice (without). No.

On your lives!

1st Voices (without). Holy father, you must not. 55

Eth. (without). Otho!

Otho. Who calls on Otho?

Eth. (without). Ethelbert!

Otho. Let him come in.

Enter ETHELBERT *leading in* ERMINIA.

Thou cursed abbot, why
Hast brought pollution to our holy rites?

Hast thou no fear of hangman, or the faggot?

Lud. What portent—what strange prodigy is this? 60

Con. Away!

Eth. You, Duke?

Erm. Albert has surely fail'd me!
Look at the Emperor's brow upon me bent!

Eth. A sad delay!

Con. Away, thou guilty thing!

Eth. You again, Duke? Justice, most noble
Otho!

You—go to your sister there and plot again, 65
A quick plot, swift as thought to save your heads;
For lo! the toils are spread around your den,

The world is all agape to see dragg'd forth
Two ugly monsters.

Lud. What means he, my lord?

Con. I cannot guess.

Eth. Best ask your lady sister, 70

Whether the riddle puzzles her beyond

The power of utterance.

Con. Foul barbarian, cease ;

The Princess faints !

Lud. Stab him ! O, sweetest wife !

[*Attendants bear off AURANTHE.*

Erm. Alas !

Eth. Your wife?

Lud. Aye, Satan ! does that yerk ye?

Eth. Wife ! so soon !

Lud. Aye, wife ! Oh, impudence ! 75

Thou bitter mischief ! Venomous bad priest !

How dar'st thou lift those beetle brows at me ?

Me—the prince Ludolph, in this presence here,

Upon my marriage-day, and scandalize

My joys with such opprobrious surprise ? 80

Wife ! Why dost linger on that syllable,

As if it were some demon's name pronounc'd

To summon harmful lightning, and make yawn

The sleepy thunder ? Hast no sense of fear ?

No ounce of man in thy mortality ? 85

Tremble ! for, at my nod, the sharpen'd axe

Will make thy bold tongue quiver to the roots,

Those grey lids wink, and thou not know it, monk !

Eth. O, poor deceived Prince ! I pity thee !

Great Otho ! I claim justice——

Lud.

Thou shalt have't ! 90

Thine arms from forth a pulpit of hot fire
Shall sprawl distracted ? O that that dull cowl
Were some most sensitive portion of thy life,
That I might give it to my hounds to tear !
Thy girdle some fine zealous-pained nerve
To girth my saddle ! And those devil's beads
Each one a life, that I might every day,
Crush one with Vulcan's hammer !

95

Otho.

Peace, my son ;

You far outstrip my spleen in this affair.

Let us be calm, and hear the abbot's plea

100

For this intrusion.

Lud.

I am silent, sire.

Otho. Conrad, see all depart not wanted here.*[Exeunt Knights, Ladies, &c.]*

Ludolph, be calm. Ethelbert, peace awhile.

This mystery demands an audience

Of a just judge, and that will Otho be.

105

Lud. Why has he time to breathe another word ?*Otho.* Ludolph, old Ethelbert, be sure, comes
not

To beard us for no cause ; he's not the man

To cry himself up an ambassador

Without credentials.

Lud.

I'll chain up myself.

110

Otho. Old abbot, stand here forth. Lady Erminia,
Sit. And now, abbot ! what have you to say ?

Our ear is open. First we here denounce

Hard penalties against thee, if 't be found

The cause for which you have disturb'd us here, 115

Making our bright hours muddy, be a thing
Of little moment.

Eth. See this innocent !
Otho ! thou father of the people call'd,
Is her life nothing ? Her fair honour nothing ?
Her tears from matins until even-song 120
Nothing ? Her burst heart nothing ? Emperor !
Is this your gentle niece—the simplest flower
Of the world's herbal—this fair lily blanch'd
Still with the dews of piety, this meek lady
Here sitting like an angel newly-shent, 125
Who veils its snowy wings and grows all pale,—
Is she nothing ?

Otho. What more to the purpose, abbot ?

Lud. Whither is he winding ?

Con. No clue yet !

Eth. You have heard, my Liege, and so, no doubt,
all here,

Foul, poisonous, malignant whisperings ; 130
Nay open speech, rude mockery grown common,
Against the spotless nature and clear fame
Of the princess Erminia, your niece.
I have intruded here thus suddenly,
Because I hold those base weeds, with tight hand, 135
Which now disfigure her fair growing stem,
Waiting but for your sign to pull them up
By the dark roots, and leave her palpable,
To all men's sight, a lady innocent.
The ignominy of that whisper'd tale 140
About a midnight gallant, seen to climb
A window to her chamber neighbour'd near.

I will from her turn off, and put the load
On the right shoulders ; on that wretch's head,
Who, by close stratagems, did save herself, 145
Chiefly by shifting to this lady's room
A rope-ladder for false witness.

Lud. Most atrocious !

Otho. Ethelbert, proceed.

Eth. With sad lips I shall :

For, in the healing of one wound, I fear
To make a greater. His young highness here 150
To-day was married.

Lud. Good.

Eth. Would it were good !

Yet why do I delay to spread abroad
The names of those two vipers, from whose jaw
A deadly breath went forth to taint and blast
This guileless lady ?

Otho. Abbot, speak their names. 155

Eth. A minute first. It cannot be—but may
I ask, great judge, if you to-day have put
A letter by unread ?

Otho. Does't end in this ?

Con. Out with their names !

Eth. Bold sinner, say you so ?

Lud. Out, hideous monk !

Otho. Confess, or by the wheel—— 160

Eth. My evidence cannot be far away ;
And, though it never come, be on my head
The crime of passing an attaint upon
The slanderers of this virgin.

Lud. Speak aloud !

Eth. Auranthe, and her brother there.

Con. Amaze ! 165

Lud. Throw them from the windows !

Otho. Do what you will !

Lud. What shall I do with them ?

Something of quick dispatch, for should she hear,
My soft Auranthe, her sweet mercy would
Prevail against my fury. Damned priest ! 170
What swift death wilt thou die ? As to the lady,
I touch her not.

Eth. Illustrious Otho, stay !

An ample store of misery thou hast,
Choak not the granary of thy noble mind
With more bad bitter grain, too difficult 175
A cud for the repentance of a man
Grey-growing. To thee only I appeal,
Not to thy noble son, whose yeasting youth
Will clear itself, and crystal turn again.
A young man's heart, by Heaven's blessing, is 180
A wide world, where a thousand new-born hopes
Empurple fresh the melancholy blood :
But an old man's is narrow, tenantless
Of hopes, and stuff'd with many memories,
Which, being pleasant, ease the heavy pulse— 185
Painful, clog up and stagnate. Weigh this matter
Even as a miser balances his coin ;
And, in the name of mercy, give command
That your knight Albert be brought here before
you.

He will expound this riddle ; he will show 190

A noon-day proof of bad Auranthe's guilt.

Otho. Let Albert straight be summon'd.

[*Exit one of the Nobles.*

Lud.

Impossible !

I cannot doubt—I will not—no—to doubt

Is to be ashes !—wither'd up to death !

Otho. My gentle Ludolph, harbour not a fear ; 195
You do yourself much wrong.

Lud.

O, wretched dolt !

Now, when my foot is almost on thy neck,

Wilt thou infuriate me ? Proof ! Thou fool !

Why wilt thou tease impossibility

With such a thick-skull'd persevering suit ? 200

Fanatic obstinacy ! Prodigy !

Monster of folly ! Ghost of a turn'd brain !

You puzzle me,—you haunt me,—when I dream

Of you my brain will split ! Bold sorcerer !

Juggler ! May I come near you ? On my soul 205

I know not whether to pity, curse, or laugh.

Enter ALBERT, and the Nobleman.

Here, Albert, this old phantom wants a proof !

Give him his proof ! A camel's load of proofs !

Otho. Albert, I speak to you as to a man

Whose words once utter'd pass like current
gold ; 210

And therefore fit to calmly put a close

To this brief tempest. Do you stand possess'd

Of any proof against the honourableness

Of Lady Auranthe, our new-spoused daughter ?

Alb. You chill me with astonishment. How's
this ? 215

My Liege, what proof should I have 'gainst a fame
Impossible of slur? [OTHO rises.

Erm. O wickedness !

Eth. Deluded monarch, 'tis a cruel lie.

Otho. Peace, rebel-priest !

Con. Insult beyond credence !

Erm. Almost a dream !

Lud. We have awaked from 220

A foolish dream that from my brow hath wrung

A wrathful dew. O folly ! why did I

So act the lion with this silly gnat?

Let them depart. Lady Erminia!

I ever grieved for you, as who did not? 225

But now you have, with such a brazen front,

So most maliciously, so madly striven

To dazzle the soft moon, when tenderest clouds

Should be unloop'd around to curtain her ;

I leave you to the desert of the world 230

Almost with pleasure. Let them be set free

For me! I take no personal revenge

More than against a nightmare, which a man

Forgets in the new dawn. [Exit LUDOLPH.

Otho. Still in extremes! No, they must not be loose.

Eth. Albert, I must suspect thee of a crime

So fiendish——

Otho. Fear'st thou not my fury, monk?

Conrad, be they in your safe custody

Till we determine some fit punishment.

It is so mad a deed, I must reflect

And question them in private ; for perhaps,

By patient scrutiny, we may discover
Whether they merit death, or should be piaced
In care of the physicians.

[*Exeunt OTHO and Nobles, ALBERT following.*

Con. My guards, ho !

Erm. Albert, wilt thou follow there? 245
Wilt thou creep dastardly behind his back,
And shrink away from a weak woman's eye ?
Turn, thou court-Janus ! thou forget'st thyself ;
Here is the duke, waiting with open arms,

[*Enter Guards.*

To thank thee ; here congratulate each other ; 250
Wring hands ; embrace ; and say how lucky 'twas
That I, by happy chance, hit the right man
Of all the world to trust in.

Alb. Trust ! to me !

Con. (*aside*). He is the sole one in this mystery.

Erm. Well, I give up, and save my prayers for
Heaven ! 255

You, who could do this deed, would ne'er relent,
Though, at my words, the hollow prison-vaults
Would groan for pity.

Con. Manacle them both !

Eth. I know it—it must be—I see it all !

Albert, thou art the minion !

Erm. Ah ! too plain—— 260

Con. Silence ! Gag up their mouths ! I cannot bear
More of this brawling. That the Emperor
Had placed you in some other custody !
Bring them away. [*Exeunt all but ALBERT.*

Alb. Though my name perish from the book of honour,

Almost before the recent ink is dry, 266
And be no more remember'd after death,
Than any drummer's in the muster-roll ;
Yet shall I season high my sudden fall
With triumph o'er that evil-witted duke ! 270
He shall feel what it is to have the hand
Of a man drowning, on his hateful throat.

Enter GERSA and SIGIFRED.

Ger. What discord is at ferment in this house ?

Sig. We are without conjecture ; not a soul
We met could answer any certainty. 275

Ger. Young Ludolph, like a fiery arrow, shot
By us.

Sig. The Emperor, with cross'd arms, in thought.

Ger. In one room music, in another sadness,
Perplexity everywhere !

Alb. A trifle more !

Follow ; your presences will much avail 280
To tune our jarred spirits. I'll explain. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—AURANTHE'S *Apartment.*

AURANTHE and CONRAD *discovered.*

Con. Well, well, I know what ugly jeopardy
We are caged in ; you need not pester that
Into my ears. Prythee, let me be spared
A foolish tongue, that I may bethink me

Of remedies with some deliberation.

5

You cannot doubt but 'tis in Albert's power

To crush or save us?

Aur.

No, I cannot doubt.

He has, assure yourself, by some strange means,

My secret ; which I ever hid from him,

Knowing his mawkish honesty.

Con.

Cursed slave ! 10

Aur. Aye, I could almost curse him now myself.

Wretched impediment ! Evil genius !

A glue upon my wings, that cannot spread,

When they should span the provinces ! A snake,

A scorpion, sprawling on the first gold step, 15

Conducting to the throne, high canopied.

Con. You would not hear my counsel, when his life

Might have been trodden out, all sure and hush'd ;

Now the dull animal forsooth must be

Intreated, managed ! When can you contrive 20

The interview he demands ?

Aur.

As speedily

It must be done as my brib'd woman can

Unseen conduct him to me ; but I fear

'Twill be impossible, while the broad day

Comes through the panes with persecuting glare. 25

Methinks, if 't now were night I could intrigue

With darkness, bring the stars to second me,

And settle all this trouble.

Con.

Nonsense ! Child !

See him immediately ; why not now ?

Aur. Do you forget that even the senseless door-
posts 30

Are on the watch and gape through all the house?
How many whisperers there are about,
Hungry for evidence to ruin me ;
Men I have spurn'd, and women I have taunted ?
Besides, the foolish prince sends, minute whiles, 35
His pages—so they tell me—to enquire
After my health, entreating, if I please,
To see me.

Con. Well, suppose this Albert here ;
What is your power with him ?

Aur. He should be
My echo, my taught parrot ! but I fear 40
He will be cur enough to bark at me ;
Have his own say ; read me some silly creed
'Bout shame and pity.

Con. What will you do then ?

Aur. What I shall do, I know not : what I would
Cannot be done ; for see, this chamber-floor 45
Will not yield to the pick-axe and the spade,—
Here is no quiet depth of hollow ground.

Con. Sister, you have grown sensible and wise,
Seconding, ere I speak it, what is now,
I hope, resolv'd between us.

Aur. Say, what is't ? 50

Con. You need not be his sexton too : a man
May carry that with him shall make him die
Elsewhere,—give that to him ; pretend the while
You will to-morrow succumb to his wishes,
Be what they may, and send him from the Castle 55
On some fool's errand ; let his latest groan
Frighten the wolves !

Aur. Alas ! he must not die !

Con. Would you were both hearsed up in stifling
lead !

Detested——

Aur. Conrad, hold ! I would not bear
The little thunder of your fretful tongue, 60
Tho' I alone were taken in these toils,
And you could free me ; but remember, sir,
You live alone in my security :
So keep your wits at work, for your own sake,
Not mine, and be more mannerly.

Con. Thou wasp ! 65
If my domains were emptied of these folk,
And I had thee to starve——

Aur. O, marvellous !
But Conrad, now be gone ; the host is look'd for ;
Cringe to the Emperor, entertain the Lords,
And, do ye mind, above all things, proclaim 70
My sickness, with a brother's sadden'd eye,
Condoling with Prince Ludolph. In fit time
Return to me.

Con. I leave you to your thoughts. [*Exit.*

Aur. (sola). Down, down, proud temper ! down,
Auranthe's pride !

Why do I anger him when I should kneel ? 75
Conrad ! Albert ! help ! help ! What can I do ?
O wretched woman ! lost, wreck'd, swallow'd up,
Accursed, blasted ! O, thou golden Crown,
Orbing along the serene firmament
Of a wide empire, like a glowing moon ; 80
And thou, bright sceptre ! lustrous in my eyes,—

There—as the fabled fair Hesperian tree,
Bearing a fruit more precious ! graceful thing,
Delicate, godlike, magic ! must I leave
Thee to melt in the visionary air, 85
Ere, by one grasp, this common hand is made
Imperial ? I do not know the time
When I have wept for sorrow ; but methinks
I could now sit upon the ground, and shed
Tears, tears of misery. O, the heavy day ! 90
How shall I bear my life till Albert comes ?
Ludolph ! Erminia ! Proofs ! O heavy day !
Bring me some mourning weeds, that I may 'tire
Myself, as fits one wailing her own death :
Cut off these curls, and brand this lily hand, 95
And throw these jewels from my loathing sight,—
Fetch me a missal, and a string of beads,—
A cup of bitter'd water, and a crust,—
I will confess, O holy Abbot !—How !
What is this ? Auranthe ! thou fool, dolt, 100
Whimpering idiot ! up ! up ! and quell !
I am safe ! Coward ! why am I in fear ?
Albert ! he cannot stickle, chew the cud
In such a fine extreme,—impossible !
Who knocks ? 105

[Goes to the Door, listens, and opens it.]

Enter ALBERT.

Albert, I have been waiting for you here
With such an aching heart, such swooning throbs
On my poor brain, such cruel—cruel sorrow,
That I should claim your pity ! Art not well ?

Alb. Yes, lady, well.

Aur. You look not so, alas ! 110

But pale, as if you brought some heavy news.

Alb. You know full well what makes me look so pale.

Aur. No ! Do I ? Surely I am still to learn
Some horror ; all I know, this present, is
I am near hustled to a dangerous gulph, 115
Which you can save me from,—and therefore safe,
So trusting in thy love ; that should not make
Thee pale, my Albert.

Alb. It doth make me freeze.

Aur. Why should it, love ?

Alb. You should not ask me that,
But make your own heart monitor, and save 120
Me the great pain of telling. You must know.

Aur. Something has vext you, Albert. There are
times

When simplest things put on a sombre cast ;
A melancholy mood will haunt a man,
Until most easy matters take the shape 125
Of unachievable tasks ; small rivulets
Then seem impassable.

Alb. Do not cheat yourself
With hope that gloss of words, or suppliant action,
Or tears, or ravings, or self-threaten'd death,
Can alter my resolve.

Aur. You make me tremble ; 130
Not so much at your threats, as at your voice,
Untuned, and harsh, and barren of all love.

Alb. You suffocate me ! Stop this devil's parley,
And listen to me ; know me once for all.

Aur. I thought I did. Alas! I am deceived. 135

Alb. No, you are not deceived. You took me for
A man detesting all inhuman crime ;
And therefore kept from me your demon's plot
Against Erminia. Silent? Be so still ;
For ever ! Speak no more ; but hear my words, 140
Thy fate. Your safety I have bought to-day
By blazoning a lie, which in the dawn
I'll expiate with truth.

Aur. O cruel traitor !

Alb. For I would not set eyes upon thy shame ;
I would not see thee dragg'd to death by the hair, 145
Penanced, and taunted on a scaffolding !
To-night, upon the skirts of the blind wood
That blackens northward of these horrid towers,
I wait for you with horses. Choose your fate.
Farewell.

Aur. Albert, you jest ; I'm sure you must. 150
You, an ambitious Soldier ! I, a Queen,
One who could say,—Here, rule these Provinces !
Take tribute from those cities for thyself !
Empty these armouries, these treasuries,
Must'ring thy warlike thousands at a nod ! 155
Go ! conquer Italy !

Alb. Auranthe, you have made
The whole world chaff to me. Your doom is
fixed.

Aur. Out, villain ! dastard !

Alb. Look there to the door!

Who is it?

Aur. Conrad, traitor !

Alb.

Let him in.

Enter CONRAD.

Do not affect amazement, hypocrite, 160
At seeing me in this chamber.

Con.

Auranthe?

Alb. Talk not with eyes, but speak your curses out
Against me, who would sooner crush and grind
A brace of toads, than league with them t' oppress
An innocent lady, gull an Emperor, 165
More generous to me than autumn sun
To ripening harvests.

Aur.

No more insult, sir!

Alb. Aye, clutch your scabbard; but, for prudence
sake,
Draw not the sword; 'twould make an uproar, Duke,
You would not hear the end of. At nightfall 170
Your lady sister, if I guess aright,
Will leave this busy castle. You had best
Take farewell too of worldly vanities.

Con. Vassal!

Alb. To-morrow, when the Emperor sends
For loving Conrad, see you fawn on him. 175
Good even!

Aur. You'll be seen!*Alb.*

See the coast clear then.

Aur. (*as he goes*). Remorseless Albert! Cruel,
cruel wretch! [*She lets him out.*]

Con. So, we must lick the dust?*Aur.*

I follow him.

Con. How? Where? The plan of your escape?

Aur. He waits
For me with horses by the forest-side, 180
Northward.

Con. Good, good ! he dies. You go, say you ?

Aur. Perforce.

Con. Be speedy, darkness! Till that comes,
Fiends keep you company! [*Exit.*]

Aur. And you ! And you !
And all men ! Vanish !

[Retires to an inner Apartment.

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in the Castle.*

Enter LUDOLPH and Page.

Page. Still very sick, my Lord ; but now I went,
Knowing my duty to so good a prince ; *
And there her women in a mournful throng
Stood in the passage whispering : if any
Mov'd 'twas with careful steps and hush'd as death ; 5
They bade me stop.

Lud. Good fellow, once again
Make soft enquiry ; prythee be not stay'd
By any hindrance, but with gentlest force
Break through her weeping servants, till thou com'st
E'en to her chamber door, and there, fair Boy, 10
If with thy mother's milk thou hast suck'd in
Any diviner eloquence, woo her ears

* This line is supplied by Mr. Forman from a portion of the manuscript of the play that was in Severn's possession.

With plaints for me more tender than the voice
Of dying Echo, echoed.

Page.

Kindest master !

To know thee sad thus, will unloose my tongue 15
In mournful syllables. Let but my words reach
Her ears and she shall take them coupled with
Moans from my heart and sighs not counterfeit.
May I speed better ! [*Exit Page.*

Lud.

Auranthe ! My Life !

Long have I loved thee, yet till now not loved : 20
Remembering, as I do, hard-hearted times
When I had heard e'en of thy death perhaps,
And,—thoughtless !—suffer'd thee to pass alone
Into Elysium ! now I follow thee
A substance or a shadow, whereso'er 25
Thou leadest me,—whether thy white feet press,
With pleasant weight, the amorous-aching earth,
Or thro' the air thou pioneerest me,
A shade ! Yet sadly I predestinate !
O unbenignest Love, why wilt thou let 30
Darkness steal out upon the sleepy world
So wearily ; as if night's chariot wheels
Were clogg'd in some thick cloud. O, changeful
Love,

Let not her steeds with drowsy-footed pace
Pass the high stars, before sweet embassy 35
Comes from the pillow'd beauty of that fair
Completion of all delicate nature's wit.
Pout her faint lips anew with rubious health
And with thine infant fingers lift the fringe
Of her sick eyelids ; that those eyes may glow 40

With wooing light upon me, ere the Morn
Peers with disrelish, grey, barren, and cold.

Enter GERSA and Courtiers.

Otho calls me his Lion—should I blush
To be so tamed, so——

Ger. Do me the courtesy,
Gentlemen, to pass on.

Cour. We are your servants. 45
[*Exeunt Courtiers.*]

Lud. It seems then, Sir, you have found out the
Man

You would confer with ; me?

Ger. If I break not
Too much upon your thoughtful mood, I will
Claim a brief while your patience.

Lud. For what cause
Soe'er I shall be honour'd.

Ger. I not less. 50

Lud. What may it be? No trifle can take place
Of such deliberate prologue, serious 'haviour.

But be it what it may I cannot fail

To listen with no common interest—

For though so new your presence is to me, 55
I have a soldier's friendship for your fame—
Please you explain.

Ger. As thus—for, pardon me,
I cannot in plain terms grossly assault
A noble nature; and would faintly sketch
What your quick apprehension will fill up
So finely I esteem you.

Lud. I attend——

Ger. Your generous Father, most illustrious Otho,
Sits in the Banquet room among his Chiefs—
His wine is bitter, for you are not there,
His eyes are fix'd still on the open doors, 65
And every passer in he frowns upon
Seeing no Ludolph comes.

Lud. I do neglect——

Ger. And for your absence, may I guess the
cause?

Lud. Stay there! no—guess? more princely you
must be—

Than to make guesses at me. 'Tis enough, 70
I'm sorry I can hear no more.

Ger. And I

As grieved to force it on you so abrupt;
Yet one day you must know a grief whose sting
Will sharpen more the longer 'tis conceal'd.

Lud. Say it at once, sir! Dead! dead—is she
dead? 75

Ger. Mine is a cruel task: she is not dead—
And would for your sake she were innocent——

Lud. Hungarian! thou amazest me beyond
All scope of thought; convulsest my heart's blood
To deadly churning! Gersa, you are young 80
As I am; let me observe you face to face;
Not grey-brow'd like the poisonous Ethelbert,
No rheumed eyes, no furrowing of age,
No wrinkles where all vices nestle in
Like crannied vermin—no, but fresh and young 85
And hopeful featur'd. Ha! by heaven you weep!

Tears, human tears ! Do you repent you then
Of a curs'd torturer's office ? Why shouldst join—
Tell me—the league of devils ? Confess—confess
The lie——

Ger. Lie !—but begone all ceremonious points
Of honour battailous ! I could not turn 91
My wrath against thee for the orb'd world.

Lud. Your wrath, weak boy ? Tremble at mine
unless
Retraction follow close upon the heels
Of that late 'stounding insult : why has my
sword 95

Not done already a sheer judgment on thee ?
Despair, or eat thy words ! Why, thou wast nigh
Whimpering away my reason : hark ye, Sir,
It is no secret, that Erminia,
Erminia, Sir, was hidden in your tent ; 100
O bless'd asylum ! comfortable home !
Begone, I pity thee, thou art a gull—
Erminia's last new puppet——

Ger. Furious fire,
Thou mak'st me boil as hot as thou canst flame !
And in thy teeth I give thee back the lie ! 105
Thou liest ! Thou, Auranthe's fool ! A wittol——

Lud. Look ! look at this bright sword,
There is no part of it to the very hilt
But shall indulge itself about thine heart !
Draw—but remember thou must cower thy plumes, 110
As yesterday the Arab made thee stoop——

Ger. Patience ! not here, I would not spill thy
blood

Here underneath this roof where Otho breathes,
Thy father—almost mine——

Lud. O faltering Coward——

Re-enter PAGE.

Stay, stay, here is one I have half a word with— 115
Well—What ails thee, child?

Page. My lord.

Lud. What wouldst say?

Page. They are fled!

Lud. They! Who?

Page. When anxiously

I hasten'd back, your grieving messenger,
I found the stairs all dark, the lamps extinct,
And not a foot or whisper to be heard. 120

I thought her dead, and on the lowest step
Sat listening; when presently came by
Two muffled up,—one sighing heavily,
The other cursing low, whose voice I knew
For the Duke Conrad's. Close I follow'd them 125
Thro' the dark ways they chose to the open air;
And, as I follow'd, heard my lady speak.

Lud. Thy life answers the truth!

Page. The chamber's empty!

Lud. As I will be of mercy! So, at last,
This nail is in my temples!

Ger. Be calm in this. 130

Lud. I am.

Ger. And Albert too has disappear'd;
Ere I met you, I sought him everywhere;
You would not hearken.

Lud. Which way went they, boy?

Ger. I'll hunt with you.

Lud. No, no, no. My senses are
Still whole. I have survived. My arm is strong— 135
My appetite sharp—for revenge! I'll no sharer
In my feast; my injury is all my own,
And so is my revenge, my lawful chattels!
Terrier, ferret them out! Burn—burn the witch!
Trace me their footsteps! Away! 140

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I. — *A Part of the Forest.*

Enter CONRAD and AURANTHE.

Aur. Go no further; not a step more; thou art
A master plague in the midst of miseries.
Go—I fear thee. I tremble every limb,
Who never shook before. There's moody death
In thy resolved looks—Yes, I could kneel 5
To pray thee far away. Conrad, go, go—
There! yonder underneath the boughs I see
Our horses!

Con. Aye, and the man.

Aur. Yes, he is there.

Go go,—no blood, no blood, go gentle Conrad!

Con. Farewell!

Aur. Farewell, for this Heaven pardon you. 10

[*Exit AURANTHE.*]

Con. If he survive one hour, then may I die
In unimagined tortures, or breathe through
A long life in the foulest sink of the world !
He dies ! 'Tis well she do not advertise
The caitiff of the cold steel at his back. 15
[*Exit* CONRAD.]

Enter LUDOLPH and PAGE.

Lud. Miss'd the way, boy ? Say not that on your
peril !

Page. Indeed, indeed I cannot trace them further.

Lud. Must I stop here ? Here solitary die ?
Stifled beneath the thick oppressive shade
Of these dull boughs,—this oven of dark thickets,— 20
Silent,—without revenge ?—pshaw !—bitter end,—
A bitter death,—a suffocating death,—
A gnawing—silent—deadly, quiet death !
Escaped ?—fled ?—vanish'd ? melted into air ?
She's gone ! I cannot clutch her ! no revenge ! 25
A muffled death, ensnared in horrid silence !
Suck'd to my grave amid a dreamy calm !
O, where is that illustrious noise of war,
To smother up this sound of labouring breath,
This rustle of the trees !

[AURANTHE shrieks at a distance.]

Page. My Lord, a noise ! 30

This way—hark !

Lud. Yes, yes ! A hope ! A music !
A glorious clamour ! How I live again !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*Another Part of the Forest.*

Enter ALBERT (wounded).

Alb. O for enough life to support me on
To Otho's feet——

Enter LUDOLPH.

Lud. Thrice villainous, stay there !
Tell me where that detested woman is
Or this is through thee !

Alb. My good Prince, with me
The sword has done its worst ; not without worst 5
Done to another—Conrad has it home—
I see you know it all——

Lud. Where is his sister?

AURANTHE *rushes in.*

Aur. Albert !

Lud. Ha! There! there!—He is the
paramour!—

There—hug him—dying! O, thou innocence,
Shrine him and comfort him at his last gasp, 10
Kiss down his eyelids! Was he not thy love?
Wilt thou forsake him at his latest hour?
Keep fearful and aloof from his last gaze,
His most uneasy moments, when cold death
Stands with the door ajar to let him in? 15

Alb. O that that door with hollow slam would close
Upon me sudden, for I cannot meet,
In all the unknown chambers of the dead,
Such horrors——

Lud. Auranthe! what can he mean?

What horrors? Is it not a joyous time? 20

Am I not married to a paragon

“Of personal beauty and untainted soul?”

A blushing fair-eyed purity! A sylph,

Whose snowy timid hand has never sinn’d

Beyond a flower pluck’d, white as itself? 25

Albert, you do insult my bride—your mistress—

To talk of horrors on our wedding-night.

Alb. Alas! poor Prince, I would you knew my
heart.

’Tis not so guilty——

Lud. Hear! he pleads not guilty!

You are not? or if so what matters it? 30

You have escap’d me,—free as the dusk air—

Hid in the forest—safe from my revenge;

I cannot catch you—You should laugh at me,

Poor cheated Ludolph,—make the forest hiss

With jeers at me—You tremble; faint at once, 35

You will come to again. O cockatrice,

I have you! Whither wander those fair eyes

To entice the Devil to your help that he

May change you to a Spider, so to crawl

Into some cranny to escape my wrath? 40

Alb. Sometimes the counsel of a dying man

Doth operate quietly when his breath is gone—

Disjoin those hands—part—part—do not destroy

Each other—forget her—our miseries

Are equal shared, and mercy is——

Lud. A boon 45

When one can compass it. Auranthe, try

Your oratory—your breath is not so hitch’d—

Aye, stare for held— [ALBERT *groans and dies.*
There goes a spotted soul
Howling in vain along the hollow night—
Hear him—he calls you—Sweet Auranthe, come ! 50
Aur. Kill me.
Lud. No ! What ? Upon our Marriage-night !
The earth would shudder at so foul a deed—
A fair bride ! A sweet bride ! An innocent bride !
No, we must revel it, as 'tis in use
In times of delicate brilliant ceremony : 55
Come, let me lead you to our halls again—
Nay, linger not—make no resistance, sweet—
Will you—Ah wretch, thou canst not, for I have
The strength of twenty lions 'gainst a lamb—
Now—one adieu for Albert !—come away ! 60
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*An inner Court of the Castle.*

*Enter SIGIFRED, GONFRED, and THEODORE,
meeting.*

Theo. Was ever such a night?

Sig. What horrors more?

Things unbelieved one hour, so strange they are,
The next hour stamps with credit.

Theo. Your last news?

Gon. After the page's story of the death
Of Albert and Duke Conrad?

Sig. And the return 5
Of Ludolph with the Princess.

Gon. No more save

Prince Gersa's freeing Abbot Ethelbert,
And the sweet lady, fair Erminia,
From prison.

Theo. Where are they now? hast yet heard?

Gon. With the sad Emperor they are closeted; 10
I saw the three pass slowly up the stairs,
The lady weeping, the old Abbot cowl'd.

Sig. What next?

Theo. I ache to think on't.

Gon. 'Tis with fate.

Theo. One while these proud towers are hush'd as
death.

Gon. The next our poor Prince fills the arched
rooms 15

With ghastly ravings.

Sig. I do fear his brain.

Gon. I will see more. Bear you so stout a heart?
[*Exeunt into the Castle.*

SCENE IV.—*A Cabinet, opening towards a Terrace.*

OTHO, ERMINIA, ETHELBERT, and a Physician,
discovered.

Otho. O, my poor boy! my son! my son! my
Ludolph!

Have ye no comfort for me, ye physicians
Of the weak body and soul?

Eth. 'Tis not in medicine
Either of heaven or earth to cure, unless
Fit time be chosen to administer. 5

Otho. A kind forbearance, holy Abbot—come
Erminia, here sit by me, gentle girl ;
Give me thy hand—hast thou forgiven me ?

Erm. Would I were with the saints to pray for you !

Otho. Why will ye keep me from my darling
child ? 10

Phys. Forgive me, but he must not see thy face——

Otho. Is then a father's countenance a Gorgon ?
Hath it not comfort in it ? Would it not
Console my poor boy, cheer him, heal his spirits ?
Let me embrace him, let me speak to him— 15
I will—who hinders me ? Who's Emperor ?

Phys. You may not, Sire—'twould overwhelm him
quite,

He is so full of grief and passionate wrath,
Too heavy a sigh would kill him—or do worse.
He must be saved by fine contrivances— 20
And most especially we must keep clear
Out of his sight a father whom he loves—
His heart is full, it can contain no more,
And do its ruddy office.

Eth. Sage advice ;
We must endeavour how to ease and slacken 25
The tight-wound energies of his despair,
Not make them tenser——

Otho. Enough ! I hear, I hear.
Yet you were about to advise more—I listen.

Eth. This learned doctor will agree with me,
That not in the smallest point should he be thwarted, 30
Or gainsaid by one word—his very motions,
Nods, becks, and hints, should be obey'd with care,

Even on the moment : so his troubled mind
May cure itself——

Phys. There are no other means.

Otho. Open the door ; let 's hear if all is quiet—— 35

Phys. Beseech you, Sire, forbear.

Erm. Do, do.

Otho. I command !

Open it straight—hush !—quiet—my lost boy !
My miserable child !

Lud. (indistinctly without). Fill, fill my goblet,—
Here's a health !

Erm. O, close the door !

Otho. Let, let me hear his voice ; this cannot
last— 40

And fain would I catch up his dying words,
Though my own knell they be—this cannot last—
O let me catch his voice—for lo ! I hear
This silence whisper me that he is dead !
It is so. Gersa ?

Enter GERSA.

Phys. Say, how fares the Prince ? 45

Ger. More calm—his features are less wild and
flush'd—

Once he complain'd of weariness——

Phys. Indeed !

'Tis good—'tis good—let him but fall asleep,
That saves him.

Otho. Gersa, watch him like a child—
Ward him from harm—and bring me better news——

Phys. Humour him to the height. I fear to go ; 51

For should he catch a glimpse of my dull garb,
It might affright him—fill him with suspicion
That we believe him sick, which must not be—

Ger. I will invent what soothing means I can. 55

[*Exit GERSA.*

Phys. This should cheer up your Highness—
weariness

Is a good symptom, and most favourable—

It gives me pleasant hopes. Please you, walk forth
Upon the terrace ; the refreshing air

Will blow one half of your sad doubts away. 60

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*A Banqueting Hall, brilliantly illuminated, and set forth with all costly magnificence, with Supper-tables, laden with services of Gold and Silver. A door in the back scene, guarded by two Soldiers. Lords, Ladies, Knights, Gentlemen, &c., whispering sadly, and ranging themselves ; part entering and part discovered.*

1st Knight. Grievously are we tantalised, one and
all—

Sway'd here and there, commanded to and fro
As though we were the shadows of a dream
And link'd to a sleeping fancy. What do we here?

Gon. I am no seer—you know we must obey
The Prince from A to Z—though it should be
To set the place in flames. I pray hast heard
Where the most wicked Princess is?

1st Knight.

There, Sir,

In the next room—have you remark'd those two
Stout soldiers posted at the door?

Gon.

For what? 19

[*They whisper.*]

1st Lady. How ghast a train!

2nd Lady. Sure this should be some splendid
burial.

1st Lady. What fearful whispering! See, see,—
Gersa there!

Enter GERSA.

Ger. Put on your brightest looks; smile if you can;
Behave as all were happy; keep your eyes 15
From the least watch upon him; if he speaks
To any one, answer collectedly,
Without surprise, his questions, howe'er strange.
Do this to the utmost,—though, alas! with me
The remedy grows hopeless! Here he comes,— 20
Observe what I have said,—show no surprise.

Enter LUDOLPH, followed by SIGIFRED and Page.

Lud. A splendid company! rare beauties here!
I should have Orphean lips, and Plato's fancy,
Amphion's utterance, toned with his lyre,
Or the deep key of Jove's sonorous mouth, 25
To give fit salutation. Methought I heard,
As I came in, some whispers,—what of that?
'Tis natural men should whisper; at the kiss
Of Psyche given by Love, there was a buzz
Among the gods!—and silence is as natural. 30
These draperies are fine, and, being a mortal,

I should desire no better ; yet, in truth,
There must be some superior costliness,
Some wider-domed high magnificence !
I would have, as a mortal I may not, 35
Hanging of heaven's clouds, purple and gold,
Slung from the spheres, gauzes of silver mist,
Loop'd up with cords of twisted wreathed light,
And tassell'd round with weeping meteors !
These pendent lamps and chandeliers are bright 40
As earthly fires from dull dross can be cleansed ;
Yet could my eyes drink up intenser beams
Undazzled,—this is darkness,—when I close
These lids, I see far fiercer brilliances,—
Skies full of splendid moons, and shooting stars, 45
And spouting exhalations, diamond fires,
And panting fountains quivering with deep glows !
Yes—this is dark—is it not dark ?

Sig. My Lord,

'Tis late ; the lights of festival are ever
Quench'd in the morn.

Lud. 'Tis not to-morrow then? 50

Sig. 'Tis early dawn.

Ger. Indeed full time we slept ;

Say you so, Prince?

Lud. I say I quarrell'd with you ;

We did not tilt each other,—that's a blessing,—
Good gods ! no innocent blood upon my head !

Sig. Retire, Gersa !

Lud. There should be three more here : 55

For two of them, they stay away perhaps,
Being gloomy-minded, haters of fair revels,

They know their own thoughts best.

As for the third,

Deep blue eyes—semi-shaded in white lids,
Finish'd with lashes fine for more soft shade, 60
Completed by her twin-arch'd ebon brows—
White temples of exactest elegance,
Of even mould felicitous and smooth—
Cheeks fashion'd tenderly on either side,
So perfect, so divine that our poor eyes 65
Are dazzled with the sweet proportioning,
And wonder that 'tis so,—the magic chance !
Her nostrils, small, fragrant, fairy-delicate ;
Her lips—I swear no human bones e'er wore
So taking a disguise—you shall behold her ! 70
We'll have her presently ; aye, you shall see her,
And wonder at her, friends, she is so fair—
She is the world's chief jewel, and by heaven
She's mine by right of marriage—she is mine !
Patience, good people, in fit time I send 75
A Summoner—she will obey my call,
Being a wife most mild and dutiful.
First I would hear what music is prepared
To herald and receive her—let me hear !

Sig. Bid the musicians soothe him tenderly. 80

[A soft strain of Music.]

Lud. Ye have none better ? no—I am content ;
'Tis a rich sobbing melody, with reliefs
Full and majestic ; it is well enough,
And will be sweeter, when ye see her pace
Sweeping into this presence, glisten'd o'er 85
With emptied caskets, and her train upheld

By ladies, habited in robes of lawn,
Sprinkled with golden crescents ; (others bright
In silks, with spangles shower'd,) and bow'd to
By Duchesses and pearled Margravines— 90
Sad, that the fairest creature of the earth—
I pray you mind me not—'tis sad, I say,
That the extremest beauty of the world
Should so entrench herself away from me,
Behind a barrier of engender'd guilt ! 95

2nd Lady. Ah ! what a moan !

1st Knight. Most piteous indeed !

Lud. She shall be brought before this company,
And then—then——

1st Lady. He muses.

Ger. O, Fortune, where will this end ?

Sig. I guess his purpose ! Indeed he must not have
That pestilence brought in,—that cannot be, 100
There we must stop him.

Ger. I am lost ! Hush, hush !
He is about to rave again.

Lud. A barrier of guilt ! I was the fool,
She was the cheater ! Who's the cheater now,
And who the fool ? The entrapp'd, the caged fool, 105
The bird-lim'd raven ? She shall croak to death
Secure ! Methinks I have her in my fist,
To crush her with my heel ! Wait, wait ! I marvel
My father keeps away : good friend, ah ! Sigifred !
Do bring him to me—and Erminia 110
I fain would see before I sleep—and Ethelbert,
That he may bless me, as I know he will
Though I have cursed him.

Sig. Rather suffer me
To lead you to them——

Lud. No, excuse me, no—
The day is not quite done—go bring them hither. 115

Exit SIGIFRED.

Certes a father's smile should, like sunlight,
Slant on my sheaved harvest of ripe bliss—
Besides I thirst to pledge my lovely bride
In a deep goblet : let me see—what wine?
The strong Iberian juice, or mellow Greek? 120
Or pale Calabrian? Or the Tuscan grape?
Or of old Ætna's pulpy wine presses,
Black stain'd with the fat vintage, as it were
The purple slaughter-house, where Bacchus' self
Prick'd his own swollen veins? Where is my page?

Page. Here, here ! 125

Lud. Be ready to obey me ; anon thou shalt
Bear a soft message for me—for the hour
Draws near when I must make a winding up
Of bridal mysteries—a fine-spun vengeance !
Carve it on my tomb, that when I rest beneath 130
Men shall confess — This Prince was gull'd and
cheated,

But from the ashes of disgrace he rose
More than a fiery Phoenix *—and did burn
His ignominy up in purging fires—
Did I not send, Sir, but a moment past, 135
For my father ?

* This word is substituted, from Severn's manuscript, for "dragon," which appears in Lord Houghton's editions.

Ger. You did.

Lud. Perhaps 'twould be
Much better he came not.

Ger. He enters now !

Enter OTHO, ERMINIA, ETHELBERT, SIGIFRED,
and Physician.

Lud. O thou good Man, against whose sacred head
I was a mad conspirator, chiefly too
For the sake of my fair newly wedded wife, 140
Now to be punish'd, do not look so sad !
Those charitable eyes will thaw my heart,
Those tears will wash away a just resolve,
A verdict ten times sworn ! Awake—awake—
Put on a judge's brow, and use a tongue 145
Made iron-stern by habit ! Thou shalt see
A deed to be applauded, 'scribed in gold !
Join a loud voice to mine, and so denounce
What I alone will execute !

Otho. Dear son,
What is it ? By your father's love, I sue 150
That it be nothing merciless !

Lud. To that demon ?
Not so ! No ! She is in temple-stall
Being garnish'd for the sacrifice, and I,
The Priest of Justice, will immolate her
Upon the altar of wrath ! She stings me through !— 155
Even as the worm doth feed upon the nut,
So she, a scorpion, preys upon my brain !
I feel her gnawing here ! Let her but vanish,
Then, father, I will lead your legions forth,

Compact in steeled squares, and speared files, 160
And bid our trumpets speak a fell rebuke
To nations drowsed in peace !

Otho. To-morrow, son,
Be your word law—forget to-day——

Lud. I will
When I have finish'd it—now ! now ! I'm pight,
Tight-footed for the deed !

Erm. Alas ! Alas ! 165

Lud. What Angel's voice is that ? Erminia !
Ah ! gentlest creature, whose sweet innocence
Was almost murder'd ; I am penitent,
Wilt thou forgive me ? And thou, holy man,
Good Ethelbert, shall I die in peace with you ? 170

Erm. Die, my Lord !

Lud. I feel it possible.

Otho. Physician ?

Phys. I fear me he is past my skill.

Otho. Not so !

Lud. I see it, I see it—I have been wandering—
Half-mad—not right here—I forget my purpose.
Bestir, bestir, Auranthe ! ha ! ha ! ha ! 175
Youngster ! page ! go bid them drag her to me !
Obey ! this shall finish it ! [*Draws a dagger.*

Otho. O my son ! my son !

Sig. This must not be—stop there !

Lud. Am I obey'd ?
A little talk with her—no harm—haste ! haste !

[*Exit Page.*

Set her before me—never fear I can strike. 180

Several Voices. My Lord ! My Lord !

Ger. Good Prince !

Lud. Why do ye trouble me? out—out—out away!
There she is! take that! and that! no, no—
That's not well done—Where is she?

[The doors open. Enter Page. Several women are seen grouped about Aurranthe in the inner room.]

Page. Alas ! My Lord, my Lord ! they cannot
move her !

Her arms are stiff,—her fingers clench'd and cold——

Lud. She's dead ! [*Staggers and falls into
their arms.*]

Eth. Take away the dagger,

Ger. Softly ; so !

Otho. Thank God for that !

Sig. It could not harm him now.

Ger. No !—brief be his anguish !

Lud. She's gone—I am content—Nobles, good
night !

We are all weary, faint, set ope the doors—

I will to bed!—To-morrow—— [Dies.]

THE CURTAIN FALLS.

KING STEPHEN:

A DRAMATIC FRAGMENT.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

KING STEPHEN.

QUEEN MAUD.

THE EARL OF GLOCESTER.

THE EARL OF CHESTER.

EARL BALDWIN DE REDVERS.

DE KAIMS.

Knights, Captains, Soldiers.

KING STEPHEN :

A DRAMATIC FRAGMENT.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Field of Battle.*

Alarum. Enter King STEPHEN, Knights, and Soldiers.

Steph. If shame can on a soldier's vein-swoll'n
front

Spread deeper crimson than the battle's toil,
Blush in your casing helmets ! for see, see !
Yonder my chivalry, my pride of war,
Wrench'd with an iron hand from firm array, 5
Are routed loose about the plashy meads,
Of honour forfeit. O that my known voice
Could reach your dastard ears, and fright you
more !

Fly, cowards, fly ! Gloucester is at your backs !
Throw your slack bridles o'er the flurried manes. 10
Ply well the rowel with faint trembling heels,
Scampering to death at last !

1st Knight. The enemy
Bears his flaunt standard close upon their rear.

2nd Knight. Sure of a bloody prey, seeing the
fens

Will swamp them girth-deep.

Steph. Over head and ears. 15

No matter ! 'Tis a gallant enemy ;

How like a comet he goes streaming on.

But we must plague him in the flank,—hey, friends ?

We are well breathed,—follow !

Enter Earl BALDWIN and Soldiers, as defeated.

Steph. De Redvers !

What is the monstrous bugbear that can fright 20
Baldwin ?

Bald. No scare-crow, but the fortunate star
Of boisterous Chester, whose fell truncheon now
Points level to the goal of victory.

This way he comes, and if you would maintain
Your person unaffronted by vile odds, 25
Take horse, my Lord.

Steph. And which way spur for life ?
Now I thank Heaven I am in the toils,
That soldiers may bear witness how my arm
Can burst the meshes. Not the eagle more
Loves to beat up against a tyrannous blast, 30
Than I to meet the torrent of my foes.

This is a brag,—be 't so,—but if I fall,
Carve it upon my 'scutcheon'd sepulchre.
On, fellow soldiers ! Earl of Redvers, back !
Not twenty Earls of Chester shall brow-beat 35
The diadem.

[*Exeunt. Alarum.*]

SCENE II.—*Another part of the Field.*

*Trumpets sounding a Victory. Enter GLOCESTER,
Knights, and Forces.*

Glo. Now may we lift our bruised vizors up,
And take the flattering freshness of the air,
While the wide din of battle dies away
Into times past, yet to be echoed sure
In the silent pages of our chroniclers. 5

1st Knight. Will Stephen's death be mark'd there,
my good Lord,
Or that we gave him lodging in yon towers?

Glo. Fain would I know the great usurper's fate.

Enter two Captains severally.

1st Cap. My Lord !

2nd Cap. Most noble Earl !

1st Cap. The King——

2nd Cap. The Empress greets——

Glo. What of the King?

1st Cap. He sole and lone maintains 10
A hopeless bustle 'mid our swarming arms,
And with a nimble savageness attacks,
Escapes, makes fiercer onset, then anew
Eludes death, giving death to most that dare
Trespass within the circuit of his sword ! 15
He must by this have fallen. Baldwin is taken ;
And for the Duke of Bretagne, like a stag
He flies, for the Welsh beagles to hunt down.
God save the Empress !

Glo. Now our dreaded Queen !
What message from her Highness ?

2nd Cap. Royal Maud 20
From the throng'd towers of Lincoln hath look'd down,
Like Pallas from the walls of Ilion,
And seen her enemies havock'd at her feet.
She greets most noble Gloucester from her heart,
Intreating him, his captains, and brave knights, 25
To grace a banquet. The high city gates
Are envious which shall see your triumph pass ;
The streets are full of music.

Enter Second Knight.

Glo. Whence come you ?

2nd Knight. From Stephen, my good Prince,—
Stephen ! Stephen !

Glo. Why do you make such echoing of his name ? 30

2nd Knight. Because I think, my Lord, he is no man,
But a fierce demon, 'nointed safe from wounds,
And misbaptized with a Christian name.

Glo. A mighty soldier !—Does he still hold out ?

2nd Knight. He shames our victory. His valour
still 35
Keeps elbow-room amid our eager swords,
And holds our bladed falchions all aloof—
His gleaming battle-axe being slaughter-sick,
Smote on the morion of a Flemish knight,
Broke short in his hand ; upon the which he flung 40
The heft away with such a vengeful force,
It paunch'd the Earl of Chester's horse, who then
Spleen-hearted came in full career at him.

Glo. Did no one take him at a vantage then?

2nd Knight. Three then with tiger leap upon him
flew, 45

Whom, with his sword swift-drawn and nimbly held,
He stung away again, and stood to breathe,

Smiling. Anon upon him rush'd once more

A throng of foes, and in this renew'd strife,

My sword met his and snapp'd off at the hilt. 50

Glo. Come, lead me to this man—and let us move
In silence, not insulting his sad doom

With clamorous trumpets. To the Empress bear

My salutation as befits the time.

[*Exeunt GLOCESTER and Forces.*]

SCENE III.—*The Field of Battle.*

Enter STEPHEN unarmed.

Steph. Another sword! And what if I could seize
One from Bellona's gleaming armoury,

Or choose the fairest of her sheaved spears!

Where are my enemies? Here, close at hand,

Here come the testy brood. O for a sword! 5

I'm faint—a biting sword! A noble sword!

A hedge-stake—or a ponderous stone to hurl

With brawny vengeance, like the labourer Cain.

Come on! Farewell my kingdom, and all hail

Thou superb, plumed, and helmeted renown, 10

All hail—I would not truck this brilliant day

To rule in Pylos with a Nestor's beard—

Come on!

Enter DE KAIMS and Knights, &c.

De Kaims. Is 't madness, or a hunger after death,
That makes thee thus unarm'd throw taunts at us?
Yield, Stephen, or my sword's point dips in 15
The gloomy current of a traitor's heart.

Steph. Do it, De Kaims, I will not budge an
inch.

De Kaims. Yes, of thy madness thou shalt take
the meed.

Steph. Darest thou?

De Kaims. How dare, against a man disarm'd?

Steph. What weapons has the lion but himself? 20
Come not near me, De Kaims, for by the price
Of all the glory I have won this day,
Being a king, I will not yield alive
To any man but the second man of the realm,
Robert of Gloucester.

De Kaims. Thou shalt vail to me. 25

Steph. Shall I, when I have sworn against it, sir?
Thou think'st it brave to take a breathing king,
That, on a court-day bow'd to haughty Maud,
The awed presence-chamber may be bold
To whisper, there's the man who took alive 30
Stephen—me—prisoner. Certes, De Kaims,
The ambition is a noble one.

De Kaims. 'Tis true,
And, Stephen, I must compass it.

Steph. No, no,
Do not tempt me to throttle you on the gorge,
Or with my gauntlet crush your hollow breast, 35

Just when your knighthood is grown ripe and full
For lordship.

A Soldier. Is an honest yeoman's spear
Of no use at a need? Take that.

Steph. Ah, dastard !

De Kaims. What, you are vulnerable ! my
prisoner !

Steph. No, not yet. I disclaim it, and demand 40
Death as a sovereign right unto a king
Who 'sdains to yield to any but his peer,
If not in title, yet in noble deeds,
The Earl of Gloucester. Stab to the hilt, De Kaims,
For I will never by mean hands be led 45
From this so famous field. Do you hear ! Be quick !

[*Trumpets. Enter the Earl of CHESTER
and Knights.*]

SCENE IV.—*A Presence Chamber. Queen MAUD in
a Chair of State, the Earls of GLOUCESTER and
CHESTER, Lords, Attendants.*

Maud. Gloucester, no more : I will behold that
Boulogne :

Set him before me. Not for the poor sake
Of regal pomp and a vain-glorious hour,
As thou with wary speech, yet near enough,
Hast hinted.

Glo. Faithful counsel have I given ; 5
If wary, for your Highness' benefit.

Maud. The Heavens forbid that I should not
think so,

For by thy valour have I won this realm,
Which by thy wisdom I will ever keep.
To sage advisers let me ever bend 10
A meek attentive ear, so that they treat
Of the wide kingdom's rule and government,
Not trenching on our actions personal.
Advised, not school'd, I would be ; and henceforth
Spoken to in clear, plain, and open terms, 15
Not side-ways sermon'd at.

Glo. Then, in plain terms,
Once more for the fallen king——

Maud. Your pardon, brother,
I would no more of that ; for, as I said,
'Tis not for worldly pomp I wish to see
The rebel, but as dooming judge to give 20
A sentence something worthy of his guilt.

Glo. If't must be so, I'll bring him to your presence.

[*Exit GLOCESTER.*

Maud. A meaner summoner might do as well—
My Lord of Chester, is 't true what I hear
Of Stephen of Boulogne, our prisoner, 25
That he, as a fit penance for his crimes,
Eats wholesome, sweet, and palatable food
Off Gloucester's golden dishes—drinks pure wine,
Lodges soft ?

Ches. More than that, my gracious Queen,
Has anger'd me. The noble Earl, methinks, 30
Full soldier as he is, and without peer
In counsel, dreams too much among his books.
It may read well, but sure 'tis out of date
To play the Alexander with Darius.

Maud. Truth ! I think so. By Heavens it shall
not last ! 35

Ches. It would amaze your Highness now to mark
How Gloucester overstrains his courtesy
To that crime-loving rebel, that Boulogne—

Maud. That ingrate !

Ches. For whose vast ingratitude
To our late sovereign lord, your noble sire, 40
The generous Earl condoles in his mishaps,
And with a sort of lackeying friendliness,
Talks off the mighty frowning from his brow,
Woos him to hold a duet in a smile,
Or, if it please him, play an hour at chess—— 45

Maud. A perjured slave !

Ches. And for his perjury,
Gloucester has fit rewards—nay, I believe,
He sets his bustling household's wits at work
For flatteries to ease this Stephen's hours,
And make a heaven of his purgatory ; 50
Adorning bondage with the pleasant gloss
Of feasts and music, and all idle shows
Of indoor pageantry ; while syren whispers,
Predestin'd for his ear, 'scape as half-check'd
From lips the courtliest and the rubiest 55
Of all the realm, admiring of his deeds.

Maud. A frost upon his summer !

Ches. A queen's nod
Can make his June December. Here he comes.

* * * * *

THE CAP AND BELLS;

OR,

THE JEALOUSIES:

A FAERY TALE—UNFINISHED.

THE CAP AND BELLS;

OR,

THE JEALOUSIES:

A FAERY TALE—UNFINISHED.

I,

IN midmost Ind, beside Hydaspes cool,
There stood, or hover'd, tremulous in the air,
A faery city, 'neath the potent rule
Of Emperor Elfinan; fam'd ev'rywhere
For love of mortal woman, maidens fair,
Whose lips were solid, whose soft hands were made
Of a fit mould and beauty, ripe and rare,
To pamper his slight wooing, warm yet staid:
He lov'd girls smooth as shades, but hated a mere
shade.

II.

This was a crime forbidden by the law;
And all the priesthood of his city wept,
For ruin and dismay they well foresaw,
If impious prince no bound or limit kept,

And faery Zendervester overstept ;
They wept, he sinn'd, and still he would sin on,
They dreamt of sin, and he sinn'd while they
slept ;

In vain the pulpit thunder'd at the throne,
Caricature was vain, and vain the tart lampoon.

III.

Which seeing, his high court of parliament
Laid a remonstrance at his Highness' feet,
Praying his royal senses to content
Themselves with what in faery land was sweet,
Befitting best that shade with shade should meet :
Whereat, to calm their fears, he promis'd soon
From mortal tempters all to make retreat,—
Aye, even on the first of the new moon,
An immaterial wife to espouse as heaven's boon.

IV.

Meantime he sent a fluttering embassy
To Pigmio, of Imaus sovereign,
To half beg, and half demand, respectfully,
The hand of his fair daughter Bellanaine ;
An audience had, and speeching done, they gain
Their point, and bring the weeping bride away ;
Whom, with but one attendant, safely lain
Upon their wings, they bore in bright array,
While little harps were touch'd by many a lyric fay.

V.

As in old pictures tender cherubim
A child's soul thro' the sapphir'd canvas bear,
So, thro' a real heaven, on they swim
With the sweet princess on her plumaged lair,
Speed giving to the winds her lustrous hair ;
And so she journey'd, sleeping or awake,
Save when, for healthful exercise and air,
She chose to "*promener à l'aile*," or take
A pigeon's somerset, for sport or change's sake.

VI.

"Dear Princess, do not whisper me so loud,"
Quoth Corallina, nurse and confidant,
"Do not you see there, lurking in a cloud,
Close at your back, that sly old Crafticant ?
He hears a whisper plainer than a rant :
Dry up your tears, and do not look so blue ;
He's Elfinan's great state-spy militant,
His running, lying, flying foot-man too,—
Dear mistress, let him have no handle against you !

VII.

"Show him a mouse's tail, and he will guess,
With metaphysic swiftness, at the mouse ;
Show him a garden, and with speed no less,
He'll surmise sagely of a dwelling house,

And plot, in the same minute, how to chouse
The owner out of it ; show him a"— "Peace !
Peace ! nor contrive thy mistress' ire to rouse !"
Return'd the Princess, "my tongue shall not cease
Till from this hated match I get a free release.

VIII.

"Ah, beauteous mortal !" "Hush !" quoth
Coralline,
"Really you must not talk of him, indeed."
"You hush !" reply'd the mistress, with a shine
Of anger in her eyes, enough to breed
In stouter hearts than nurse's fear and dread :
'Twas not the glance itself made nurse's flinch,
But of its threat she took the utmost heed ;
Not liking in her heart an hour-long pinch,
Or a sharp needle run into her back an inch.

IX.

So she was silenced, and fair Bellanaine,
Writhing her little body with ennui,
Continued to lament and to complain,
That Fate, cross-purposing, should let her be
Ravish'd away far from her dear countree ;
That all her feelings should be set at nought,
In trumping up this match so hastily,
With lowland blood ; and lowland blood she thought
Poison, as every staunch true-born Imaian ought.

X.

Sorely she grieved, and wetted three or four
White Provence rose-leaves with her faery tears,
But not for this cause ;—alas ! she had more
Bad reasons for her sorrow, as appears
In the famed memoirs of a thousand years,
Written by Crafticant, and published
By Parpaglion and Co., (those sly compeers
Who raked up ev'ry fact against the dead,)
In Scarab Street, Panthea, at the Jubal's Head.

XI.

Where, after a long hypercritic howl
Against the vicious manners of the age,
He goes on to expose, with heart and soul,
What vice in this or that year was the rage,
Backbiting all the world in every page ;
With special strictures on the horrid crime,
(Section'd and subsection'd with learning sage,)
Of faeries stooping on their wings sublime
To kiss a mortal's lips, when such were in their prime.

XII.

Turn to the copious index, you will find
Somewhere in the column, headed letter B,
The name of Bellanaine, if you're not blind ;
Then pray refer to the text, and you will see
VOL. II. Y

An article made up of calumny
Against this highland princess, rating her
For giving way, so over fashionably,
To this new-fangled vice, which seems a burr
Stuck in his moral throat, no coughing e'er could stir.

XIII.

There he says plainly that she loved a man !
That she around him flutter'd, flirted, toy'd,
Before her marriage with great Elfinan ;
That after marriage too, she never joy'd
In husband's company, but still employ'd
Her wits to 'scape away to Angle-land ;
Where liv'd the youth, who worried and annoy'd
Her tender heart, and its warm ardours fann'd
To such a dreadful blaze, her side would scorch her
hand.

XIV.

But let us leave this idle tittle-tattle
To waiting-maids, and bed-room coteries,
Nor till fit time against her fame wage battle.
Poor Elfinan is very ill at ease,
Let us resume his subject if you please :
For it may comfort and console him much,
To rhyme and syllable his miseries ;
Poor Elfinan ! whose cruel fate was such,
He sat and cursed a bride he knew he could not
touch.

XV.

Soon as (according to his promises)
The bridal embassy had taken wing,
And vanish'd, bird-like, o'er the suburb trees,
The Emperor, empierced with the sharp sting
Of love, retired, vex'd and murmuring
Like any drone shut from the fair bee-queen,
Into his cabinet, and there did fling
His limbs upon a sofa, full of spleen,
And damn'd his House of Commons, in complete
chagrin.

XVI.

“I'll trounce some of the members,” cried the Prince,
“I'll put a mark against some rebel names,
I'll make the Opposition-benches wince,
I'll show them very soon, to all their shames,
What 'tis to smother up a Prince's flames ;
That ministers should join in it, I own,
Surprises me !—they too at these high games !
Am I an Emperor ? Do I wear a crown ?
Imperial Elfinan, go hang thyself or drown !

XVII.

“I'll trounce 'em !—there's the square-cut chan-
cellor,
His son shall never touch that bishopric ;
And for the nephew of old Palfior,
I'll show him that his speeches made me sick,

And give the colonelcy to Phalaric ;
The tiptoe marquis, moral and gallant,
Shall lodge in shabby taverns upon tick ;
And for the Speaker's second cousin's aunt,
She sha'n't be maid of honour,—by heaven that she
sha'n't !

XVIII.

“ I'll shirk the Duke of A. ; I'll cut his brother ;
I'll give no garter to his eldest son ;
I won't speak to his sister or his mother !
The Viscount B. shall live at cut-and-run ;
But how in the world can I contrive to stun
That fellow's voice, which plagues me worse than
any,
That stubborn fool, that impudent state-dun,
Who sets down ev'ry sovereign as a zany,—
That vulgar commoner, Esquire Biancopany ?

XIX.

“ Monstrous affair ! Pshaw ! pah ! what ugly minx
Will they fetch from Imaus for my bride ?
Alas ! my wearied heart within me sinks,
To think that I must be so near allied
To a cold dullard fay,—ah, woe betide !
Ah, fairest of all human loveliness !
Sweet Bertha ! what crime can it be to glide
About the fragrant plaitings of thy dress,
Or kiss thine eyes, or count thy locks, tress after tress ? ”

XX.

So said, one minute's while his eyes remain'd
Half lidded, piteous, languid, innocent ;
But, in a wink, their splendour they regain'd,
Sparkling revenge with amorous fury blent.
Love thwarted in bad temper oft has vent :
He rose, he stampt his foot, he rang the bell,
And order'd some death-warrants to be sent
For signature :—somewhere the tempest fell,
As many a poor fellow does not live to tell.

XXI.

“ At the same time, Eban,”—(this was his page,
A fay of colour, slave from top to toe,
Sent as a present, while yet under age,
From the Viceroy of Zanguebar,—wise, slow,
His speech, his only words were “ yes ” and “ no,”
But swift of look, and foot, and wing was he,—)
“ At the same time, Eban, this instant go
To Hum the soothsayer, whose name I see
Among the fresh arrivals in our empery.

XXII.

“ Bring Hum to me ! But stay—here, take my ring,
The pledge of favour, that he not suspect
Any foul play, or awkward murdering,
Tho' I have bowstrung many of his sect ;

Throw in a hint, that if he should neglect
One hour, the next shall see him in my grasp,
And the next after that shall see him neck'd,
Or swallow'd by my hunger-starved asp,—
And mention ('tis as well) the torture of the wasp."

XXIII.

These orders given, the Prince, in half a pet,
Let o'er the silk his propping elbow slide,
Caught up his little legs, and, in a fret,
Fell on the sofa on his royal side.
The slave retreated backwards, humble-eyed,
And with a slave-like silence closed the door,
And to old Hum thro' street and alley hied ;
He "knew the city," as we say, of yore,
And for short cuts and turns, was nobody knew more.

XXIV.

It was the time when wholesale dealers close
Their shutters with a moody sense of wealth,
But retail dealers, diligent, let loose
The gas (objected to on score of health),
Convey'd in little solder'd pipes by stealth,
And make it flare in many a brilliant form,
That all the powers of darkness it repell'th,
Which to the oil-trade doth great scaith and
harm,
And supersedeth quite the use of the glow-worm.

XXV.

Eban, untempted by the pastry-cooks,
(Of pastry he got store within the palace,)
With hasty steps, wrapp'd cloak, and solemn looks,
Incognito upon his errand sallies,
His smelling-bottle ready for the alleys ;
He pass'd the hurdy-gurdies with disdain,
Vowing he'd have them sent on board the galleys ;
Just as he made his vow, it 'gan to rain,
Therefore he call'd a coach, and bad it drive amain.

XXVI.

“ I'll pull the string,” said he, and further said,
“ Polluted jarvey ! Ah, thou filthy hack !
Whose springs of life are all dried up and dead,
Whose linsey-woolsey lining hangs all slack,
Whose rug is straw, whose wholeness is a crack ;
And evermore thy steps go clatter-clitter ;
Whose glass once up can never be got back,
Who prov'st, with jolting arguments and bitter,
That 'tis of modern use to travel in a litter.

XXVII.

“ Thou inconvenience ! thou hungry crop
For all corn ! thou snail-creeper to and fro,
Who while thou goest ever seem'st to stop,
And fiddle-faddle standest while you go ;

I' the morning, freighted with a weight of woe,
Unto some lazar-house thou journeyest,
And in the evening tak'st a double row
Of dowdies, for some dance or party drest,
Besides the goods meanwhile thou movest east and
west.

XXVIII.

“By thy ungallant bearing and sad mien,
An inch appears the utmost thou couldst budge ;
Yet at the slightest nod, or hint, or sign,
Round to the curb-stone patient dost thou trudge,
School'd in a beckon, learned in a nudge,
A dull-eyed Argus watching for a fare ;
Quiet and plodding, thou dost bear no grudge
To whisking tilburies, or phaetons rare,
Curricles, or mail-coaches, swift beyond compare.”

XXIX.

Philosophizing thus, he pull'd the check,
And bade the coachman wheel to such a street,
Who, turning much his body, more his neck,
Louted full low, and hoarsely did him greet :
“Certes, monsieur were best take to his feet,
Seeing his servant can no further drive
For press of coaches, that to-night here meet,
Many as bees about a straw-capp'd hive,
When first for April honey into faint flowers they
dive.”

XXX.

Eban then paid his fare, and tiptoe went
To Hum's hotel ; and, as he on did pass
With head inclined, each dusky lineament
Show'd in the pearl-paved street, as in a glass ;
His purple vest, that ever peeping was
Rich from the fluttering crimson of his cloak,
His silvery trowsers, and his silken sash
Tied in a burnish'd knot, their semblance took
Upon the mirror'd walls, wherever he might look.

XXXI.

He smiled at self, and, smiling, show'd his teeth,
And seeing his white teeth, he smiled the more ;
Lifted his eye-brows, spurn'd the path beneath,
Show'd teeth again, and smiled as heretofore,
Until he knock'd at the magician's door ;
Where, till the porter answer'd, might be seen,
In the clear panel more he could adore,—
His turban wreath'd of gold, and white, and green,
Mustachios, ear-ring, nose-ring, and his sabre keen.

XXXII.

“Does not your master give a rout to-night?”
Quoth the dark page. “Oh, no!” return'd the
Swiss,
“Next door but one to us, upon the right,
The *Magazin des Modes* now open is

Against the Emperor's wedding ;—and, sir, this
 My master finds a monstrous horrid bore ;
 As he retired, an hour ago I wis,
 With his best beard and brimstone, to explore
 And cast a quiet figure in his second floor.

XXXIII.

“Gad ! he's obliged to stick to business !
 For chalk, I hear, stands at a pretty price ;
 And as for aqua vitæ—there's a mess !
 The *dentes sapientiæ* of mice,
 Our barber tells me too, are on the rise,—
 Tinder's a lighter article,—nitre pure
 Goes off like lightning,—grains of Paradise
 At an enormous figure !—stars not sure !—
 Zodiac will not move without a slight douceur !

XXXIV.

“Venus won't stir a peg without a fee,
 And master is too partial, *entre nous*,
 To”—— “Hush—hush !” cried Eban, “sure that
 is he
 Coming down stairs,—by St. Bartholomew !
 As backwards as he can,—is 't something new ?
 Or is 't his custom, in the name of fun ?”
 “He always comes down backward, with one
 shoe”—
 Return'd the porter—“off, and one shoe on,
 Like, saving shoe for sock or stocking, my man John !”

XXXV.

It was indeed the great Magician,
Feeling, with careful toe, for every stair,
And retrograding careful as he can,
Backwards and downwards from his own two pair :
“Salpietro !” exclaim’d Hum, “is the dog there ?
He’s always in my way upon the mat !”
“He’s in the kitchen, or the Lord knows where,”—
Replied the Swiss,—“the nasty, yelping brat !”
“Don’t beat him !” return’d Hum, and on the floor
came pat.

XXXVI.

Then facing right about, he saw the page,
And said : “Don’t tell me what you want, Eban ;
The Emperor is now in a huge rage,—
’Tis nine to one he’ll give you the rattan !
Let us away !” Away together ran
The plain-dress’d sage and spangled blackamoor,
Nor rested till they stood to cool, and fan,
And breathe themselves at th’ Emperor’s chamber
door,
When Eban thought he heard a soft imperial snore.

XXXVII.

“I thought you guess’d, foretold, or prophesied
That ’s Majesty was in a raving fit ?”
“He dreams,” said Hum, “or I have ever lied,
That he is tearing you, sir, bit by bit.”

“ He’s not asleep, and you have little wit,”
Replied the page ; “ that little buzzing noise,
Whate’er your palmistry may make of it,
Comes from a play-thing of the Emperor’s choice,
From a Man-Tiger-Organ, prettiest of his toys.”

XXXVIII.

Eban then usher’d in the learned Seer :
Elfinan’s back was turn’d, but, ne’ertheless,
Both, prostrate on the carpet, ear by ear,
Crept silently, and waited in distress,
Knowing the Emperor’s moody bitterness ;
Eban especially, who on the floor ’gan
Tremble and quake to death,—he feared less
A dose of senna-tea or nightmare Gorgon
Than the Emperor when he play’d on his Man-
Tiger-Organ.

XXXIX.

They kiss’d nine times the carpet’s velvet face
Of glossy silk, soft, smooth, and meadow-green,
Where the close eye in deep rich fur might trace
A silver tissue, scanty to be seen,
As daisies lurk’d in June-grass, buds in green ;
Sudden the music ceased, sudden the hand
Of majesty, by dint of passion keen,
Doubled into a common fist, went grand,
And knock’d down three cut glasses, and his best
ink-stand.

XL.

Then turning round, he saw those trembling two :
 "Eban," said he, "as slaves should taste the fruits
 Of diligence, I shall remember you
 To-morrow, or next day, as time suits,
 In a finger conversation with my mutes,—
 Begone!—for you, Chaldean! here remain!
 Fear not, quake not, and as good wine recruits
 A conjurer's spirits, what cup will you drain?
 Sherry in silver, hock in gold, or glass'd champagne?"

XLI.

"Commander of the Faithful!" answer'd Hum,
 "In preference to these, I'll merely taste
 A thimble-full of old Jamaica rum."
 "A simple boon!" said Elfinan; "thou may'st
 Have Nantz, with which my morning-coffee's laced."*
 "I'll have a glass of Nantz, then,"—said the Seer,—
 "Made racy—(sure my boldness is misplaced!)—
 With the third part—(yet that is drinking dear!)—
 Of the least drop of *crème de citron*, crystal clear."

XLII.

"I pledge you, Hum! and pledge my dearest love,
 My Bertha!" "Bertha! Bertha!" cried the sage,
 "I know a many Berthas!" "Mine's above
 All Berthas!" sigh'd the Emperor. "I engage,"

* "Mr. Nisby is of opinion that laced coffee is bad
 for the head" (*Spectator*).

Said Hum, "in duty, and in vassalage,
To mention all the Berthas in the earth ;—
There's Bertha Watson,—and Miss Bertha Page,—
This famed for languid eyes, and that for mirth,—
There's Bertha Blount of York,—and Bertha Knox
of Perth."

XLIII.

"You seem to know"—"I do know," answer'd
Hum,
"Your Majesty's in love with some fine girl
Named Bertha ; but her surname will not come,
Without a little conjuring." "'Tis Pearl,
'Tis Bertha Pearl ! What makes my brains so whirl ?
And she is softer, fairer than her name !"
"Where does she live?" ask'd Hum. "Her fair
locks curl
So brightly, they put all our fays to shame !—
Live?—O ! at Canterbury, with her old grand-dame."

XLIV.

"Good ! good !" cried Hum, "I've known her
from a child !
She is a changeling of my management ;
She was born at midnight in an Indian wild ;
Her mother's screams with the striped tiger's blent,
While the torch-bearing slaves a halloo sent
Into the jungles ; and her palanquin,
Rested amid the desert's dreariment,
Shook with her agony, till fair were seen
The little Bertha's eyes ope on the stars serene."

XLV.

“I can’t say,” said the monarch ; “that may be
Just as it happen’d, true or else a bam !
Drink up your brandy, and sit down by me,
Feel, feel my pulse, how much in love I am ;
And if your science is not all a sham,
Tell me some means to get the lady here.”
“Upon my honour !” said the son of Cham,*
“She is my dainty changeling, near and dear,
Although her story sounds at first a little queer.”

XLVI.

“Convey her to me, Hum, or by my crown,
My sceptre, and my cross-surmounted globe,
I’ll knock you”—“Does your majesty mean—*down*?
No, no, you never could my feelings probe
To such a depth !” The Emperor took his robe,
And wept upon its purple palatine,
While Hum continued, shamming half a sob,—
“In Canterbury doth your lady shine ?
But let me cool your brandy with a little wine.”

XLVII.

Whereat a narrow Flemish glass he took,
That since belonged to Admiral De Witt,
Admired it with a connoisseuring look,
And with the ripest claret crowned it,

* Cham is said to have been the inventor of magic.
Lucy learnt this from Bayle’s Dictionary, and had
copied a long Latin note from that work.

And, ere the lively bead could burst and flit,
He turn'd it quickly, nimbly upside down,
His mouth being held conveniently fit
To catch the treasure : " Best in all the town ! "
He said, smack'd his moist lips, and gave a pleasant
frown.

XLVIII.

" Ah ! good my Prince, weep not ! " And then
again
He fill'd a bumper. " Great Sire, do not weep !
Your pulse is shocking, but I'll ease your pain. "
" Fetch me that Ottoman, and prithee keep
Your voice low, " said the Emperor ; " and steep
Some lady's fingers nice in Candy wine ;
And prithee, Hum, behind the screen do peep
For the rose-water vase, magician mine !
And sponge my forehead,—so my love doth make me
pine.

XLIX.

" Ah, cursed Bellanaine ! " " Don't think of her, "
Rejoined the Mago, " but on Bertha muse ;
For, by my choicest best barometer,
You shall not throttled be in marriage noose ;
I've said it, Sire ; you only have to choose
Bertha or Bellanaine. " So saying, he drew
From the left pocket of his threadbare hose,
A sampler, hoarded slyly, good as new,
Holding it by his thumb and finger full in view.

L.

“Sire, this is Bertha Pearl’s neat handy-work,
 Her *name*, see here, *Midsummer, ninety-one.*”
 Elfinan snatch’d it with a sudden jerk,
 And wept as if he never would have done,
 Honouring with royal tears the poor homespun ;
 Whereon were broider’d tigers with black eyes,
 And long-tail’d pheasants, and a rising sun,
 Plenty of posies, great stags, butterflies
 Bigger than stags,—a moon,—with other mysteries.

LI.

The monarch handled o’er and o’er again
 Those day-school hieroglyphics with a sigh ;
 Somewhat in sadness, but pleas’d in the main,
 Till this oracular couplet met his eye
 Astounded—*Cupid, I do thee defy !*
 It was too much. He shrunk back in his chair,
 Grew pale as death, and fainted—very nigh !
 “Pho ! nonsense !” exclaim’d Hum, “now don’t
 despair ;
 She does not mean it really. Cheer up, hearty—
 there !

LII.

“And listen to my words. You say you won’t,
 On any terms, marry Miss Bellanaine ;
 It goes against your conscience—good ! Well,
 don’t.

You say you love a mortal. I would fain
Persuade your honour's highness to refrain
From peccadilloes. But, Sire, as I say,
What good would that do? And, to be more
plain,
You would do me a mischief some odd day,
Cut off my ears and hands, or head too, by my fay !

LIII.

"Besides, manners forbid that I should pass any
Vile strictures on the conduct of a prince
Who should indulge his genius, if he has any,
Not, like a subject, foolish matters mince.
Now I think on't, perhaps I could convince
Your Majesty there is no crime at all
In loving pretty little Bertha, since
She's very delicate,—not over tall,—
A fairy's hand, and in the waist why—very small."

LIV.

"Ring the repeater, gentle Hum!" "'Tis five,"
Said gentle Hum; the nights draw in apace:
The little birds I hear are all alive;
I see the dawning touch'd upon your face,
Shall I put out the candles, please your Grace?"
"Do put them out, and, without more ado,
Tell me how I may that sweet girl embrace,—
How you can bring her to me." "That's for you,
Great Emperor! to adventure, like a lover true."

LV.

“ I fetch her ! ” — “ Yes, an’t like your Majesty ;
And as she would be frighten’d wide awake
To travel such a distance through the sky,
Use of some soft manœuvre you must make,
For your convenience, and her dear nerves’ sake ;
Nice way would be to bring her in a swoon,
Anon, I’ll tell what course were best to take ;
You must away this morning.” “ Hum ! so soon ? ”
“ Sire, you must be in Kent by twelve o’clock at
noon.”

LVI.

At this great Cæsar started on his feet,
Lifted his wings, and stood attentive-wise.
“ Those wings to Canterbury you must beat,
If you hold Bertha as a worthy prize.
Look in the Almanack—*Moore* never lies—
April the twenty-fourth,—this coming day,
Now breathing its new bloom upon the skies,
Will end in St. Mark’s Eve ;—you must away,
For on that eve alone can you the maid convey.”

LVII.

Then the magician solemnly ’gan to frown,
So that his frost-white eyebrows, beetling low,
Shaded his deep green eyes, and wrinkles brown
Plaited upon his furnace-scorched brow :

Forth from his hood that hung his neck below,
 He lifted a bright casket of pure gold,
 Touch'd a spring-lock, and there in wool or snow,
 Charm'd into ever freezing, lay an old
 And legend-leaved book, mysterious to behold.

LVIII.

“Take this same book,—it will not bite you, Sire ;
 There, put it underneath your royal arm ;
 Though it's a pretty weight it will not tire,
 But rather on your journey keep you warm :
 This is the magic, this the potent charm,
 That shall drive Bertha to a fainting fit !
 When the time comes, don't feel the least alarm,
 But lift her from the ground, and swiftly flit
 Back to your palace, * * * * *

LIX.

“What shall I do with that same book ?” “Why,
 merely
 Lay it on Bertha's table, close beside
 Her work-box, and 'twill help your purpose dearly ;
 I say no more.” “Or good or ill betide,
 Through the wide air to Kent this morn I glide !”
 Exclaim'd the Emperor. “When I return,
 Ask what you will,—I'll give you my new bride !
 And take some more wine, Hum ;—O Heavens !
 I burn
 To be upon the wing ! Now, now, that minx I spurn !”

LX.

“Leave her to me,” rejoin’d the magian :
“But how shall I account, illustrious fay !
For thine imperial absence ? Pho ! I can
Say you are very sick, and bar the way
To your so loving courtiers for one day ;
If either of their two archbishops’ graces
Should talk of extreme unction, I shall say
You do not like cold pig with Latin phrases,
Which never should be used but in alarming cases.”

LXI.

“Open the window, Hum ; I’m ready now !”
“Zooks !” exclaim’d Hum, as up the sash he drew,
“Behold, your Majesty, upon the brow
Of yonder hill, what crowds of people !” “Whew !
The monster’s always after something new,”
Return’d his Highness, “they are piping hot
To see my pigsney Bellanaine. Hum ! do
Tighten my belt a little,—so, so,—not
Too tight,—the book !—my wand !—so, nothing is
forgot.”

LXII.

“Wounds ! how they shout !” said Hum, “and
there,—see, see !
Th’ ambassador’s return’d from Pigmio !
The morning’s very fine,—uncommonly !
See, past the skirts of yon white cloud they go,

Tinging it with soft crimsons ! Now below
The sable-pointed heads of firs and pines
They dip, move on, and with them moves a glow
Along the forest side ! Now amber lines
Reach the hill top, and now throughout the valley
shines."

LXIII.

"Why, Hum, you're getting quite poetical !
Those *nous* you managed in a special style."
"If ever you have leisure, Sire, you shall
See scraps of mine will make it worth your while,
Tit-bits for Phœbus !—yes, you well may smile.
Hark ! hark ! the bells ! " "A little further yet,
Good Hum, and let me view this mighty coil."
Then the great Emperor full graceful set
His elbow for a prop, and snuff'd his mignonnette.

LXIV.

The morn is full of holiday ; loud bells
With rival clamours ring from every spire ;
Cunningly-station'd music dies and swells
In echoing places ; when the winds respire,
Light flags stream out like gauzy tongues of fire ;
A metropolitan murmur, lifeful, warm,
Comes from the northern suburbs ; rich attire
Freckles with red and gold the moving swarm ;
While here and there clear trumpets blow a keen
alarm.

LXV.

And now the fairy escort was seen clear,
Like the old pageant of Aurora's train,
Above a pearl-built minster, hovering near ;
First wily Crafticant, the chamberlain,
Balanc'd upon his grey-grown pinions twain,
His slender wand officially reveal'd ;
Then black gnomes scattering sixpences like rain ;
Then pages three and three ; and next, slave-held,
The Imaian 'scutcheon bright,—one mouse in argent
field.

LXVI.

Gentlemen pensioners next ; and after them,
A troop of winged Janizaries flew ;
Then slaves, as presents bearing many a gem ;
Then twelve physicians fluttering two and two ;
And next a chaplain in a cassock new ;
Then Lords in waiting ; then (what head not reels
For pleasure?)—the fair Princess in full view,
Borne upon wings,—and very pleased she feels
To have such splendour dance attendance at her heels.

LXVII.

For there was more magnificence behind :
She waved her handkerchief. “ Ah, very grand ! ”
Cried Elfinan, and closed the window-blind ;
“ And, Hum, we must not shilly-shally stand,—

Adieu ! adieu ! I'm off for Angle-land !
I say, old Hocus, have you such a thing
About you,—feel your pockets, I command,—
I want, this instant, an invisible ring,—
Thank you, old mummy !—how securely I take wing."

LXVIII.

Then Elfinan swift vaulted from the floor,
And lighted graceful on the window-sill ;
Under one arm the magic book he bore,
The other he could wave about at will ;
Pale was his face, he still look'd very ill :
He bow'd at Bellanaine. and said — "Poor
Bell!
Farewell ! farewell ! and if for ever ! still
For ever fare thee well !" —and then he fell
A laughing !—snapp'd his fingers !—shame it is to tell.

LXIX.

"By 'r Lady ! he is gone !" cries Hum, "and I—
(I own it)—have made too free with his wine ;
Old Crafticant will smoke me. By-the-bye !
This room is full of jewels as a mine,—
Dear valuable creatures, how ye shine !
Sometime to-day I must contrive a minute,
If Mercury propitiously incline,
To examine his scrutoire, and see what's in it,
For of superfluous diamonds I as well may thin it.

LXX.

“The Emperor’s horrid bad ; yes, that’s my cue !”
Some histories say that this was Hum’s last speech ;
That, being fuddled, he went reeling through
The corridor, and scarce upright could reach
The stair-head ; that being glutted as a leech,
And used, as we ourselves have just now said,
To manage stairs reversely, like a peach
Too ripe, he fell, being puzzled in his head
With liquor and the staircase : verdict—*found stone
dead.*

LXXI.

This as a falsehood Crafticanto treats ;
And as his style is of strange elegance,
Gentle and tender, full of soft conceits,
(Much like our Boswell’s,) we will take a glance
At his sweet prose, and, if we can, make dance
His woven periods into careless rhyme ;
O, little faery Pegasus ! rear—prance—
Trot round the quarto—ordinary time !
March, little Pegasus, with pawing hoof sublime !

LXXII.

Well, let us see,—*tenth book and chapter nine*,—
Thus Crafticant pursues his diary :—
“ ’Twas twelve o’clock at night, the weather fine,
Latitude thirty-six ; our scouts descry

A flight of starlings making rapidly
Towards Thibet. Mem. :—birds fly in the night ;
From twelve to half-past—wings not fit to fly
For a thick fog—the Princess sulky quite ;
Call'd for an extra shawl, and gave her nurse a bite.

LXXIII.

“Five minutes before one — brought down a
moth
With my new double-barrel—stew'd the thighs
And made a very tolerable broth—
Princess turn'd dainty, to our great surprise,
Alter'd her mind, and thought it very nice :
Seeing her pleasant, tried her with a pun,
She frown'd ; a monstrous owl across us flies
About this time,—a sad old figure of fun ;
Bad omen—this new match can't be a happy one.

LXXIV.

“From two to half-past, dusky way we made,
Above the plains of Gobi,—desert, bleak ;
Beheld afar off, in the hooded shade
Of darkness, a great mountain (strange to speak),
Spitting, from forth its sulphur-baken peak,
A fan-shap'd burst of blood-red, arrowy fire,
Turban'd with smoke, which still away did reek,
Solid and black from that eternal pyre,
Upon the laden winds that scanty could respire.

LXXV.

“Just upon three o’clock a falling star
Created an alarm among our troop,
Kill’d a man-cook, a page, and broke a jar,
A tureen, and three dishes, at one swoop,
Then passing by the Princess, singed her hoop :
Could not conceive what Coralline was at,
She clapp’d her hands three times and cry’d out
‘Whoop!’

Some strange Imaian custom. A large bat
Came sudden ’fore my face, and brush’d against my
hat.

LXXVI.

“Five minutes thirteen seconds after three,
Far in the west a mighty fire broke out,
Conjectured, on the instant, it might be,
The city of Balk—’twas Balk beyond all doubt :
A griffin, wheeling here and there about,
Kept reconnoitring us—doubled our guard—
Lighted our torches, and kept up a shout,
Till he sheer’d off—the Princess very scared—
And many on their marrow-bones for death prepared.

LXXVII.

“At half-past three arose the cheerful moon—
Bivouack’d for four minutes on a cloud—
Where from the earth we heard a lively tune
Of tambourines and pipes, serene and loud,

While on a flowery lawn a brilliant crowd
Cinque-parted danc'd, some half asleep reposed
Beneath the green-fan'd cedars, some did shroud
In silken tents, and 'mid light fragrance dozed,
Or on the open turf their soothed eyelids closed.

LXXVIII.

"Dropp'd my gold watch, and kill'd a kettledrum—
It went for apoplexy—foolish folks!—
Left it to pay the piper—a good sum—
(I've got a conscience, maugre people's jokes,)
To scrape a little favour, 'gan to coax
Her Highness' pug-dog—got a sharp rebuff—
She wish'd a game at whist—made three revokes—
Turn'd from myself, her partner, in a huff;
His majesty will know her temper time enough.

LXXIX.

"She cried for chess—I play'd a game with
her—
Castled her king with such a vixen look,
It bodes ill to his Majesty—(refer
To the second chapter of my fortieth book,
And see what hoity-toity airs she took).
At half-past four the morn essay'd to beam—
Saluted, as we pass'd, an early rook—
The Princess fell asleep, and, in her dream,
Talk'd of one Master Hubert, deep in her esteem.

LXXX.

“About this time,—making delightful way,—
Shed a quill-feather from my larboard wing—
Wish’d, trusted, hoped ’twas no sign of decay—
Thank heaven I’m hearty yet!—’twas no such
thing:—

At five the golden light began to spring,
With fiery shudder through the bloomed east ;
At six we heard Panthea’s churches ring—
The city all his unhiv’d swarms had cast,
To watch our grand approach, and hail us as we pass’d.

LXXXI.

“As flowers turn their faces to the sun,
So on our flight with hungry eyes they gaze,
And, as we shaped our course, this, that way run,
With mad-cap pleasure, or hand-clasp’d amaze ;
Sweet in the air a mild-toned music plays,
And progresses through its own labyrinth ;
Buds gather’d from the green spring’s middle-days,
They scatter’d,—daisy, primrose, hyacinth,—
Or round white columns wreath’d from capital to plinth.

LXXXII.

“Onward we floated o’er the panting streets,
That seem’d throughout with upheld faces paved ;
Look where we will, our bird’s-eye vision meets
Legions of holiday ; bright standards waved,

And fluttering ensigns emulously craved
Our minute's glance ; a busy thunderous roar,
From square to square, among the buildings
raved,

As when the sea, at flow, gluts up once more
The craggy hollowness of a wild reefed shore.

LXXXIII.

“ And ‘ Bellanaine for ever ! ’ shouted they,
While that fair Princess, from her winged chair,
Bow’d low with high demeanour, and, to pay
Their new-blown loyalty with guerdon fair,
Still emptied, at meet distance, here and there,
A plenty horn of jewels. And here I
(Who wish to give the devil her due) declare
Against that ugly piece of calumny,
Which calls them Highland pebble-stones not worth
a fly.

LXXXIV.

“ Still ‘ Bellanaine ! ’ they shouted, while we glide
’Slant to a light Ionic portico,
The city’s delicacy, and the pride
Of our Imperial Basilic ; a row
Of lords and ladies, on each hand, make show
Submissive of knee-bent obeisance,
All down the steps ; and, as we enter’d, lo !
The strangest sight—the most unlook’d-for chance—
All things turn’d topsy-turvy in a devil’s dance.

LXXXV.

“ 'Stead of his anxious Majesty and court
At the open doors, with wide saluting eyes,
Congées and scrape-graces of every sort,
And all the smooth routine of gallantries,
Was seen, to our immoderate surprise,
A motley crowd thick gather'd in the hall,
Lords, scullions, deputy-scul lions, with wild cries
Stunning the vestibule from wall to wall,
Where the Chief Justice on his knees and hands doth
crawl.

LXXXVI.

“ Counts of the palace, and the state purveyor
Of moth's-down, to make soft the royal beds,
The Common Council and my fool Lord Mayor
Marching a-row, each other slipshod treads ;
Powder'd bag-wigs and ruffy-tuffy heads
Of cinder wenches meet and soil each other ;
Toe crush'd with heel ill-natur'd fighting breeds,
Frill-rumpling elbows brew up many a bother,
And fists in the short ribs keep up the yell and pother.

LXXXVII.

“ A Poet, mounted on the Court-Clown's back,
Rode to the Princess swift with spurring heels,
And close into her face, with rhyming clack,
Began a Prothalamion ;—she reels,

She falls, she faints ! while laughter peals
 Over her woman's weakness. 'Where !' cried I,
 'Where is his Majesty ?' No person feels
 Inclined to answer ; wherefore instantly
 I plunged into the crowd to find him or to die.

LXXXVIII.

"Jostling my way I gain'd the stairs, and ran
 To the first landing, where, incredible !
 I met, far gone in liquor, that old man,
 That vile impostor Hum,——"

So far so well,—

For we have prov'd the Mago never fell
 Down stairs on Crafticanto's evidence ;
 And therefore duly shall proceed to tell,
 Plain in our own original mood and tense,
 The sequel of this day, though labour 'tis immense !

* * * * *

NOTES.

NOTES TO VOLUME II.

*Lamia, and other Poems. Published in 1820.
Advertisement.*

THE publishers seem to be responsible for the statement about the abandonment of "Hyperion." Keats, writing to J. H. Reynolds on September 22, 1819, says:—"I have given up 'Hyperion'—there were too many Miltonic inversions in it. Miltonic verse cannot be written but in an artful, or, rather, artist's humour."

P. 7. *Lamia.*

This poem was in the main, if not entirely, written at Shanklin and Winchester between July 1st and September 5th, when Keats, writing to Taylor, the publisher, announces that it is finished, and copies out ll. 122-145 as "a sample of the story."

P. 35. *Isabella; or, The Pot of Basil.*

Keats had agreed with J. H. Reynolds that they should write some tales of Boccaccio in verse and

publish them together; he, accordingly, began "Isabella" in February 1818, continued it during his stay at Teignmouth in March, and on April 27th wrote to Reynolds that it was finished. Reynolds' own share in the undertaking was published in "The Garden of Florence" in 1821.

P. 59. *The Eve of St. Agnes.*

Written in January 1819 at Chichester, and under revision in September of the same year. Founded upon the superstition that upon January 20th, the eve of St. Agnes' Day, "by taking certain measures of divination, damsels may get a sight of their future husbands in a dream. The ordinary process seems to have been by fasting."

P. 79. *Ode to a Nightingale.*

Written in May 1819 in the garden at Wentworth Place, and published in July following in the *Annals of the Fine Arts*, a quarterly magazine edited by James Elmes.

P. 82. *Ode on a Grecian Urn.*

This also belongs to the spring of 1819, and was also published in the *Annals of the Fine Arts*.

P. 84. *Ode to Psyche.*

Included in a letter to George Keats and his wife under date April 30, 1819. Keats says of it:—"The

following Poem—the last I have written—is the first and the only one with which I have taken even moderate pains.”

P. 87. *Fancy.*

This appears in a journal-letter to George and Georgiana Keats, December 1818–January 3, 1819.

P. 91. *Ode. Bards of Passion and of Mirth.*

Copied in the letter mentioned in the previous note. It is also written in Keats' copy of Beaumont and Fletcher, now in the possession of Sir Charles Dilke.

P. 92. *Lines on the Mermaid Tavern.*

This and the following poem, *Robin Hood*, were included in a letter to J. H. Reynolds, February 3, 1818.

P. 131. *Hyperion: A Vision.*

The *Lamia* volume ends with the fragment of *Hyperion*, and this re-cast of the poem, first published by Lord Houghton in *Bibliographical and Historical Miscellanies of the Philobiblon Society*, vol. iii., 1856–7, and afterwards in the second edition of the *Life, Letters, &c.*, should strictly be included among the Posthumous Poems. It was for some time taken, upon Lord Houghton's authority, for an earlier version of *Hyperion*.

P. 151. *To Byron.*

Printed in the *Life, Letters, &c.*, 1848, and dated December 1814.

P. 152. *To Chatterton.*

From the same source as the preceding.

P. 152. *To Spenser.*

Life, Letters, &c., 1848.

P. 153. *Ode to Apollo.*

Life, Letters, &c. Dated February 1815.

P. 155. *Hymn to Apollo.*

Life, Letters, &c.

P. 157. *As from the darkening gloom, &c.*

Aldine Edition, 1876. Dated 1816.

P. 157. *Oh! how I love, &c.*

Life, Letters, &c. Dated 1816.

P. 158. *Fresh morning gusts, &c.*

Life, Letters, &c.

P. 159. *The church bells toll'd, &c.*

Aldine Edition, 1876. Dated in a copy-book belonging to Tom Keats, December 24, 1816.

P. 159. *After dark vapours, &c.*

First printed in *The Examiner* of February 23, 1817; reprinted by Lord Houghton, and dated January 1819.

P. 160. *This pleasant tale, &c.*

Written in February 1817, and published in *The Examiner*, March 16, 1817.

P. 161. *Two Sonnets.*

Life, Letters, &c.; previously printed in *The Examiner*, March 9, 1817, and in *Annals of the Fine Arts*.

P. 162. *On a Picture of Leander.*

First printed in *The Gem* in 1829.

P. 163. *On * * * * *.*

Life, Letters, &c.; dated 1817.

P. 164. *Lines.*

Life, Letters, &c.

P. 165. *On the Sea.*

In a letter to J. H. Reynolds, April 17, 1817.

P. 165. *On Leigh Hunt's Poem.*

Life, Letters, &c. ; dated 1817.

P. 166. *Where's the Poet?*

This and the four following pieces are from the *Life, Letters, &c.*, where they are undated. The sonnet, *When I have fears*, was included in a letter to J. H. Reynolds, January 31, 1818.

P. 171. *To Homer.*

Life, Letters, &c. ; dated 1818.

P. 172. *A Draught of Sunshine.*

From a letter to Reynolds, January 31, 1818. Mr. Buxton Forman is responsible for the heading.

P. 173. *Faery Songs.*

Life, Letters, &c.

P. 175. *Song.*

Printed separately in the *Life, Letters, &c.*, but as one of the preceding *Faery Songs* in the Aldine Edition.

P. 176. *Stanzas.*

First printed in Galignani's edition, 1829.

P. 177. *The Human Seasons.*

In a letter to Benjamin Bailey, March 13, 1818.

P. 177. *Lines on seeing a Lock of Milton's Hair.*

In a letter to Benjamin Bailey, January 23, 1818. Keats says :—" I was at Hunt's the other day, and he surprised me with a real authenticated lock of *Milton's Hair*. I know you would like what I wrote thereon, so here it is—"

P. 179. *On sitting down to read " King Lear "*
once again.

Copied in a letter to George and Thomas Keats, January 23, 1818.

P. 179. *To the Nile.*

Written in friendly rivalry with Shelley and Leigh Hunt, February 4, 1818. See letter to George and Thomas Keats, February 16, 1818.

P. 180. *Lines from a Letter, &c.*

The letter is undated, but has a postmark, " Hampstead, February 19, 1818."

P. 181. *Sonnet written in answer, &c.*

Life, Letters, &c.; dated February 1818, followed by the next sonnet in the text, which is without a date.

P. 182. *Teignmouth.*

This and the following piece were included in a letter to Haydon of March 1818.

P. 185. *Epistle.*

This forms the principal part of a letter to Reynolds of March 25, 1818.

P. 189. *Dawlish Fair.*

In a letter to James Rice of the same date as the preceding.

P. 189. *Fragment of an Ode.*

In a letter to Reynolds of May 3, 1818.

P. 190. *Song.*

Life, Letters, &c.; dated 1818.

P. 191. *Extracts from an Opera.*

Life, Letters, &c.; dated 1818.

P. 195. *Song.*

From a letter to George Keats and his wife,
December 1818-January 4, 1819.

P. 195. *Sonnet.*

Life, Letters, &c.

P. 196. *On visiting the Tomb of Burns.*

This and the three following pieces were included
in letters to Thomas and Fanny Keats between
July 1-10, 1818.

P. 203. *Sonnet.*

Life, Letters, &c.

P. 204. *Lines written in the Highlands.*

In a letter to Bailey, July 18 (1818).

P. 207. *Staffa.*

In a letter to Tom Keats, under date July 26
(1818), where after l. 49 the poem continues:—

'Tis now free to stupid face,
To cutters and to Fashion boats,
To cravats and to Petticoats.
The great Sea shall war it down,
For its fame shall not be blown
At each farthing Quadrille dance.
So saying, &c.

P. 208. *Sonnet.*

In a letter to Tom Keats of the beginning of August 1818.

P. 209. *A Prophecy.*

In a letter of October 29, 1818, to George Keats. Printed by Lord Houghton from a slightly different version.

P. 211. *Translation from a Sonnet of Ronsard.*

In a letter to Reynolds of September 1818. Keats says :—" I had not the original by me when I wrote it, and did not recollect the purport of the last lines."

P. 212. *The Eve of St. Mark.*

Copied in a letter to George Keats under date September 20, 1819.

P. 216. *Ode to Fanny.*

Life, Letters, &c.

P. 218. *Ode on Indolence.*

Life, Letters, &c. ; dated 1819.

P. 221. *Sonnet. Why did I laugh to-night?*

This and the seven pieces which follow were all copied in the journal-letter to George Keats written February 14-May 3, 1819.

P. 232. *A Party of Lovers.*

In a letter to George Keats, September 1819.

P. 233. *Sonnet.*

Life, Letters, &c.; dated 1819.

P. 234. *Lines to Fanny.*

Life, Letters, &c.; dated October 1819.

P. 236. *Sonnet to Fanny.*

Life, Letters, &c.; dated 1819.

P. 241. *Otho the Great.*

Written at Shanklin in the summer of 1819, in conjunction with Brown, who supplied "the title, characters, and dramatic conduct."

P. 321. *King Stephen.*

This fragment was written in the autumn of 1819 upon the suggestion of Brown.

P. 333. *The Cap and Bells.*

Life, Letters, &c. Written in the spring and summer of 1820, and intended to be published under the pseudonym of "Lucy Vaughan Lloyd." The notes in the text are apparently Keats' own.

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